

# Великая Отечественная: Неизвестная война

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# 25 ИЮНЯ

## Глупость или агрессия?



## Abstract

A new long-awaited book from the best-selling author of June 22nd, On Peacefully Sleeping Airfields and June 23rd: M-Day! A new look at the history of World War II! An unexpected turn in the discussion about the reasons for the defeat of the Red Army in the summer of 1941! Previously listed as a supporter of Viktor

Suvorov, in his new book, Mark Solonin actually refutes his sensational hypothesis! Viktor Suvorov claims that in the summer of 1941, Stalin was allegedly preparing to attack Germany.

And if Hitler had not gotten ahead of him literally at the last moment, if the Red Army had had time to strike first, the Wehrmacht would have been defeated in a matter of weeks.

Hot debates around this hypothesis do not subside to this day. However, before the publication of this book, none of Suvorov's critics for some reason noticed that the alternative he described actually took place! On June 25, 1941, the Red Army tested the "Suvorov" theory in practice! What did this

test show? What would have happened if Stalin had had time to hit Germany first? What exactly is Viktor Suvorov wrong about? If you want

to know, read Mark Solonin's new sensational book!

- 
- [Preface Part 1](#)
  - [Chapter](#)
    - [1.1 Chapter](#)
    - [1.2 Chapter](#)
    - [1.3 Chapter](#)
    - [1.4 Chapter](#)
    - [1.5 Part 2](#)
  - [Chapter](#)
    - [2.1 Chapter](#)
    - [2.2 Chapter](#)
    - [2.3 Chapter](#)
    - [2.4 Chapter](#)
    - [2.5 Chapter](#)
    - [2.6 Chapter](#)
    - [2.7 Chapter](#)
    - [2.8 Part 3](#)
  - [Chapter](#)
    - [3.1 Chapter](#)
    - [3.2 Chapter](#)
    - [3.3 Chapter](#)
    - [3.4 Chapter](#)
    - [3.5 Chapter](#)
    - [3.6](#)

- [Chapter 3.7](#)
    - [Chapter 3.8](#)
    - [Chapter 3.9](#)
    - [Chapter 3.10](#)
  - [Part 4](#)
    - [Chapter 4.1](#)
    - [Chapter 4.2](#)
    - [Chapter 4.3](#)
  - [EPILOGUE](#)
  - [SOURCES](#)
-

## Foreword

In the late 30s of the 20th century, the Soviet Union lived in anticipation of war - war is inevitable and imminent.

On February 24, 1939, on the next anniversary of the creation of the Red Army, the main government newspaper Izvestia published a long article under the remarkable title "Wars Just and Unjust". The conclusion to which the reader was led was extremely simple: any war waged by the country of the victorious proletariat would be just. And here is why: *"By defending their homeland and destroying enemy troops in the territory from which they came, the Red Army helps the enslaved classes to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, to free themselves from capitalist slavery. Such a war is doubly and trebly just.* The article ended with the following words: *"The Soviet people know that the upcoming war will be very tense and fierce. (the authors have no doubts that there will be a war. - M.S.) And he will do everything necessary to put an end to fascist barbarism in the shortest possible time and with little bloodshed, to put an end to it, to put an end to the system that gives rise to unjust wars" [1].*

Two months later, speaking at the May Day parade (the Day of International Solidarity of Workers was celebrated in the Soviet Union with a military parade on Moscow's Red Square), People's Commissar of Defense K.E. Voroshilov literally stated the following: *"The Soviet people not only know how, but also love to fight!" [2].* After such words, there was no doubt that the party of Lenin-Stalin in the very near future would provide the Soviet people with the opportunity to prove their love and devotion on the battlefield of "a very tense, fierce war." There was only one question - where to start? Where, in what regions is the Red Army to "help the enslaved classes"? On March 10, 1939, the 18th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks opened in Moscow. Speaking

with the Report of the Central Committee, Stalin announced that *"the new imperialist war, which has played out over a vast territory from Shanghai to Gibraltar, has been going on for the second year" [3].* In his characteristic manner, Stalin clearly and unambiguously named three "aggressive" and three "non-aggressive" states. The top three included Germany, Italy, Japan, the second - England, France, USA. The congress delegates unanimously recognized Comrade Stalin's assessments and conclusions as the only true and even brilliant. True, already on October 31 of the same ill-fated 1939, the head of the Soviet government, Comrade Molotov, informed the deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR that the ingenious conclusions had changed radically: *"Over the past few months, such concepts as "aggression", "aggressor", have received a new content, have acquired a new meaning... Now, if we talk about the great powers of Europe, Germany is in the position of a state striving for an early end to the war and peace, while England and France stand for the continuation of the war and against the conclusion of peace" [4].* Turning directly to the topic of this study, we note the main thing, namely: Finland was never mentioned - neither in the list of aggressors, nor in the list

insidious "non-aggressive states". She, as a possible military adversary, has long been forgotten. On November 29, 1938, at a meeting of the Military Council under the NPO of the USSR, Comrade Voroshilov, in the presence of Comrade Stalin, said that "*Poland, Romania and all sorts of Baltic states there, they have already been removed from our accounts a long time ago, we have these gentlemen at any time with under all circumstances, we will grind to powder.*" The transcript of the meeting states that these words of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR were met with friendly applause [5].

The Soviet press also paid very little attention to Finland. Turning over the yellowed pages of the central newspapers of 1939, we find constant references to wallpaper in Spain and China, about the military preparations of Germany, England and the USA. on political crises in Mexico, Romania and Hungary. There was room on the newspaper page for a discussion of the economic situation in Argentina and Chile, as well as for an article about "fascist intrigues in Kenya and Tanganyika"! There were very few mentions of Finland, and (which is very remarkable!) These mentions were for the most part completely positive: a screening of Soviet films took place in the Finnish cinema, which everyone in the audience liked very much; the Finnish newspaper, commenting on the next speech of the Soviet leader, found her wise and far-sighted, and the like. In general, the position of Soviet propaganda in relation to Finland could be characterized by the words "positive indifference". Yes, of course, in 1935-1937. in the general framework of the eradication of "bourgeois nationalism" in the Soviet Union

(mainly in Karelia and the Leningrad region), a campaign against "Finnish nationalism" was launched. As in all such cases, the leaders of the Communist Party of Finland, comfortably located in the USSR, were arrested and shot as "agents of the White Finnish intelligence", but such was the general practice of the "work" of the NKVD bodies with all the emigrant sections of the Comintern. In any case, the anti-Finnish campaign by no means reached the level of an all-Union event. It is noteworthy that during the largest processes of the "great purge" of 1937-1938. the doomed were accused of links with the German, Japanese, Polish, French, Latvian special services - but not at all with the Finnish ones! The trouble, as usual, came unexpectedly. On November 3, 1939, an article appeared in Pravda, strange in form and even more surprising in content. It was said at length and vaguely that Finland does not want to strengthen friendship with its great eastern

neighbor, stubbornly rejects the peace-loving proposals of the Soviet Union, is on the lead of some unnamed, but well-known "warmongers". The article ended with a completely hysterical cry: "*We will cast aside any game of political gamblers and go our own way no matter what. We will ensure the security of the USSR, regardless of anything, breaking all and every obstacles on the way to the goal.*" It is easy to imagine the extreme surprise that such words could cause in ordinary Soviet citizens, most of whom had a vague idea - where is this very Finland? What game"? What are "gamblers"? Where do you need to go now, without looking around and "breaking everything on the way to the goal"? And what is this "goal"? Three weeks later, from the pages of the newspapers, from the black plate of the loudspeaker, a stream of wild, pogromist anti-Finnish propaganda splashed out. Otherwise how

The leaders of Finland were no longer called “pea jesters”, “political cheaters” and “gamblers”. In the last days before the war, the rough newspaper scolding, growing from forte to fortissimo, turned into a continuous hysterical roar: *“To teach the presumptuous warriors a lesson! Woe to those who stand in our way! It's time to curb the insignificant flea that jumps and grimace at our borders! Sweep the Finnish adventurers off the face of the earth! The time has come to destroy the vile booger who dares to threaten the Soviet Union!* The best Soviet poets urgently composed poems, for example, such as: *“If a fighter goes to shoot mad dogs, The people around him willingly help, Crazy jesters will find their end, Burned at the stake, which they set on fire” [40].*

The invasion of Finland was staged with an unprecedented loud theatricality - the troops crossed the border in marching columns, with portraits of Stalin and unfurled banners. Enthusiastic self-delusion reached the point that already on December 1, 1939, on the second day of the war, Pravda wrote without a shadow of a doubt: *“The Red Army will be able to deliver a crushing blow not only to the Finnish booger, but also to those behind whose back this booger is hiding!”* In the same newspaper it was reported that “the purveyor Comrade. Kukushkina”, speaking at a factory rally, expressed her firm conviction that the “White Guard hell”, in which Finnish workers suffered for twenty years, had come to an end ...

And so, in the style of a crude farce, to the screeching and hooting of corrupt hacks, to the applause of the deceived and intimidated townsfolk, the terrible tragedy of the two peoples began. The

“small victorious war” planned by Stalin turned into a heavy, long-term, bloody massacre. The fighting between the Soviet and Finnish armies continued - with long breaks - from November 30, 1939 to September 5, 1944. Almost five years. The document signed on September 19, 1944 in Moscow was only an armistice agreement, but as for the peace treaty that formally and legally ended the war between Finland and the allied powers (USSR, Great Britain and others), it was signed on February 10, 1947, and ratified by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR only on August 29, 1947.

The most active hostilities lasted a total of at least eight months: the “winter war” (from November 30, 1939 to March 13, 1940), the summer campaign of 1941 (from early July to the end of October), the summer campaign of 1944 (from 10 June to mid-August). The scale of the losses of the Red Army in the Soviet-Finnish war is horrifying. The exact figures are unknown to this day (and are unlikely to be established in the future). An analysis of the information given in the most authoritative and “conservative” (in the good sense of the word) source [9] suggests that the irretrievable losses of the Soviet troops — killed, died of wounds in hospitals, killed in captivity, missing — amounted to more **than 200 thousand**

**Human.**

Everything is relative. In the long-term war with Japan (the battles near Lake Khasan in 1938, the battles at Khalkhin Gol in 1939, the Manchurian offensive operation of 1945), the Red Army irrevocably lost 21 thousand people [9], the Ground Forces of our allies (England, Canada, USA) in the battles for the liberation of Western Europe - from the landing in Normandy to the exit to the Elbe - they lost 156 thousand people killed [11].

On the other hand, the German Wehrmacht during the offensive on the Western Front (May-June 1940), which ended in the defeat of the armies of France, Belgium and Holland, irrevocably lost 49 thousand people [12]. The occupation of Norway (April-May 1940), during which German troops defeated not only the small Norwegian army, but also the Allied expeditionary force, cost Germany 3.7 thousand dead and missing [65].

Unfortunately, the human losses of the Soviet Union in the war with Finland are by no means exhausted by the losses of the active army. The blockade of Leningrad, which claimed the lives of more than a million civilians, became possible only as a result of the defeat of the Red Army in the summer campaign of 1941, when the exit of Finnish troops to Sortavala and Keksgolm (Priozersk) interrupted the railway communication between Leningrad and the mainland, bypassing the northern coast of Lake Ladoga. Finally, in addition to direct human and material losses that can be quantified, the senseless and merciless war with Finland inflicted indirect, but no less significant military and political damage on the Soviet Union. In December 1939, it was the aggression against Finland that caused the exclusion of the USSR from the League of Nations, and the bombing of Finnish cities by Soviet aircraft led US President Roosevelt to decide to extend the so-called moral embargo regime to the Soviet Union (ban on the transfer of aircraft weapons and technologies). All this further strengthened the international isolation of the USSR, and also created additional problems in the Soviet aviation industry (especially in the production of aircraft engines, traditionally based on the use of American technologies), and this happened on the eve of a big war, on the eve of the most difficult trials that awaited the Soviet Union ...

It is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine an American or Canadian who does not know anything about the fact that his country's army fought in Western Europe during World War II. It is difficult and impossible to imagine a Frenchman or an Englishman who does not know that in 1940 France was occupied by the Wehrmacht, and in the summer of 1944 it was liberated by the Allied troops who landed in Normandy. In terms of the number of human casualties, the Soviet-Finnish war (as shown above) is quite comparable with military campaigns in Western Europe, and yet, even among graduates of the history departments of Soviet universities, it is difficult to find a person who can give at least approximate dates for the beginning and end of this war. name its main stages and results. As for ordinary citizens who are not connected by the nature of their activities with the study of military history, it is practically impossible to find such experts among them. And this situation is by no means accidental.

In a totalitarian state, the right to study and interpret the events of the past is the exclusive privilege of the ruling elite and its propaganda servants. That is why the history of a totalitarian society is always unpredictable. For the Stalinist-Brezhnev leadership of the USSR, the Finnish war was the episode that they would least like to remember. Neither in the criminal plans of the Kremlin rulers, nor in the shameful defeats of the Red Army, could one find worthy material for "educating the working people in the spirit of selfless devotion and love for their native Communist Party." Therefore, it was ordered - to forget. Everyone forgot.



For many decades, the war with Finland was for the Soviet society a "lost", "unknown" (as Tvardovsky said - "unfamous") war. For half a century, not a single feature or documentary film or television film has been shot, not a single medal has been established for participants in the Finnish war. In those rare cases when in a fictional or documentary story there was a mention of the battles on the Finnish front by 1941-1944, the enemy soldiers were simply called "fascist German soldiers" without undue embarrassment.

invaders."

On the other hand, the totalitarian regime demanded that historical science also exist within the general framework of "advanced socialist science and deep party culture". And although the final conclusion of any historical study was known in advance - "The Soviet Union was right, because it is always right", - thick, often multi-volume books on military history were written and published. With regard to the coverage of the events of the Soviet-Finnish war, **a combination of the following three points** was developed, "highest" sanctioned and steadily observed. First, to talk about this war as little as possible. If possible, don't

mention it at all. In the literature accessible to a wide range of readers, a brief discussion of the topic of the "winter war" is possible, but never the war of 1941-1944.

Secondly, in relation to the "winter war" to call and interpret it as a purely local (in place and tasks) "armed conflict on the Karelian Isthmus." In the literature accessible to a wide range of readers (in particular, in all school and university textbooks), do not allow even the slightest mention of the secret protocol to the "Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact", the so-called People's Government of Democratic Finland and other events and facts that reveal the real intentions of Stalin's leadership by hiding all significant documents (it should be noted that even neutral newspapers of 1939-1940 were withdrawn from open access in all public libraries of the USSR) to depict large-scale aggression in the form of a local defensive action.

Thirdly, firmly, categorically, without allowing any criticism, to reject any connection between the first ("winter war" of 1939-1940) and subsequent stages of the war. The term "continuation war", generally accepted in Western historiography, should be declared a malicious fabrication of anti-Soviet falsifiers of history. Combat operations 1941-1944 name and interpret exclusively and only as "participation of the Finnish army in the German fascist aggression against the USSR."

The profound social and political changes that took place in the Soviet Union at the turn of 1980-1990 created a qualitatively new situation for scholarly historians. There was access to such sources of documentary information, which had not even been dreamed of before. It became possible to draw their own, unbiased conclusions and share these conclusions with the scientific community without regard to censorship. Remembering today the atmosphere of the late 80s, we can say that society froze in anticipation of a sip of the long-awaited historical truth. Were these hopes justified? It is very difficult to give a balanced and unambiguous answer to this question. Judging by the number of publications on military-historical topics,

their "paper shaft" exceeded the wildest expectations. bookstore shelves



today they are littered with mountains of historical research, memoirs, photo albums, collections of documents - and yet every month Russian publishers throw several dozens (or even hundreds) of new titles of military history literature onto the market. Alas, the situation with the quality and scientific conscientiousness of replicated books is by no means rosy. The freedom of speech and press, which so unexpectedly fell upon Russia, is sometimes expressed in the fact that completely incompetent people, with money or rich sponsors, can fill the market with their graphomaniac crafts. Things have come to the emergence of such an incredible genre as a documentary fake: "photocopies" of primitively and crudely fabricated "documents" are printed, "diaries" of never-existing "Stalin's secret advisers" are published, from somewhere no one (including close relatives) appears unknown "memoirs" of long-dead people... Speaking in engineering terms, the "signal-to-noise ratio" in modern Russian historiography and historical journalism is extremely unfavorable.

Leaving outside the scope of this review pseudo-historical writings that do not create anything but "information noise", let's focus on the content of the "useful signal". One cannot deny significant achievements in the development of scientific historiography of the Soviet-Finnish war. The issues related to the "winter war" of 1939-1940 have been worked out in the most detail. The declassification of a significant array of archival funds made it possible to introduce into scientific circulation documents describing in detail both the military-political preparations for the war and the course of hostilities. Of particular interest are the assessments and conclusions made "hot on the heels" of the events of the "winter war" by the top military-political leadership of the USSR [20, 21]. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, voluminous collections of primary documents were published [16, 17, 18]. Exceptionally valuable material, which makes it possible to more accurately assess the goals and objectives of Stalin's policy towards Finland, is contained in a multi-volume series of documents on the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation [19]. In the same years, the memoirs of prominent Finnish political figures and the works of famous Finnish historians were translated into Russian and published [22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32]. The radical expansion of the source base available to historians has made it possible to create a number of major monographic

studies [14, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35]. Studying these works, it is impossible not to note a certain paradoxical thinking of some Russian historians. For example, while recognizing the fact that the Finnish peacetime army was 60 times smaller in terms of personnel, 100 times smaller in combat aircraft, and 350 times smaller than the Red Army in terms of tanks, they nevertheless declare that "*military preparations Finland caused natural concern in the government of the USSR*". Another author explains this "restlessness" as follows. "*In Moscow, the military threat from Finland was taken very seriously - militarily, this state was significantly superior to Estonia and Latvia.*" Well, this list could be continued by adding Luxembourg, Monaco and the Principality of Liechtenstein to it ...

The beginning of the "winter war" is described in the following words: "*November 30, 1939, the troops of the Leningrad Military District received an order to push the Finnish troops back from Leningrad.*" The phrase is built as if the "Finnish troops" crossed the border, invaded the Soviet

territory and went to the suburbs of Leningrad - after which they had to be "thrown away"! Another typical example is the absolutely legal right of the leadership of a sovereign country not to sign an agreement, the terms of which, according to the unanimous opinion of the government and parliament, contradict the state interests of Finland, a modern Russian historian comments as follows: "Finland's demonstrative intransigence and the campaign launched in the world press to support its *position left Moscow no choice but war*. The logic is amazing: did the victim leave the rapist "no other choice" with his "intransigence"?

In a word, it is too early to put an end to the study of the history of the "winter war". Many questions (above all, the question of the true motives that prompted Stalin to first start a war and then stop it without achieving any of the goals he had previously failed) are still debatable. And yet, the enormous — in comparison with Soviet historiography — progress seems obvious and indisputable. Much less studied is that stage of the Soviet-Finnish

war, which began on June 25, 1941 and received the name "continuation war" in Finnish historiography. The tradition of total silence in this case has a long history. The beginning was laid 65 years ago by the Soviet Information Bureau, which did not inform the Soviet people about the beginning or (which is already quite strange) about the end of this war! On June 26, 1941, a single phrase appeared in the report of the Sovinformburo: "*There were no military clashes of ground troops on the Soviet-Finnish border on June 26*" [36]. Even a deep knowledge of the Soviet propaganda "newspeak" will not allow us to conclude from this phrase that it was on this day that Finnish President Pisto Ryti officially announced that his country had entered the war with the USSR. In September 1944, the Soviet Information Bureau did not utter a word about the ceasefire reached on September 4-5, and the conclusion of the Armistice Agreement on September 19.

Returning to the summer of 1941, we find exactly THREE reports of the Soviet Information Bureau, in which at least the word "Finnish" appears in some case:

- evening message on June 29: "*Finnish-German troops went on the offensive along the entire front from the Barents Sea to the Gulf of Finland* (in relation to the events of June 29, this was an obvious exaggeration. - M.S.), *trying to break through our fortifications along the state border line. Repeated attacks by the Finnish-German troops were repulsed by our troops*";

- morning message of July 28: "*Our aircraft also bombarded the Finnish coastal defense battleship. Direct hits of 500 kg of bombs and strong explosions were observed*"; -

- evening message of September 21: "*The Finnish coastal defense battleship Ilmarinen, attacked by our ships in the Gulf of Finland, ran into mines and sank.*" And it's all.

There were no other reports for three months (July, August, September 1941) of the war, during which the Red Army lost 190 thousand people killed, wounded and captured. True, extremely short references to battles in the "Ukhta, Keksholm, Petrozavodsk directions" occasionally appeared in the reports of the Sovinformburo, but in these "directions" the Red Army fought either with an unnamed "enemy" or with "German troops".

To this day, not a single serious monograph has been published in Russia (similar to the major studies of the "winter war" mentioned above), in which the history of the war of 1941-1944 would be described. has become the subject of a comprehensive, unbiased study. Moreover, **the priority of propaganda over scientific research has even increased in recent years.** This is probably due to the general change in sentiment in Russian society, in which the "inferiority complex" caused by the country's progressive lagging behind - now not only from Western Europe, but also from the rapidly developing states of Asia and Latin America - is bizarrely intertwined with great-power, imperial ambition. In such a poisoned atmosphere, criticism of Stalin's foreign policy begins to be perceived as a "manifestation of Russophobia", and intolerance and aggressive ignorance familiar from Soviet times are complemented by verbal unbridledness that was previously unusual even for communist propaganda. Let us give one, but rather typical example. In recent years, the name of a certain "Finnish sociologist" Johan Backman

has flashed on the pages of the Russian media. The young (born in 1972) person is introduced to readers as *"a recognized specialist in Russia, who has often been in St. Petersburg since 1993, where he lives for months, doing scientific work."* In the latest (published in 2006 under the editorship of V.N. Baryshnikov) collection dedicated to the history of Soviet-Finnish relations, one can also get acquainted with the fruits of this "scientific work".

In his article, J. Backman demands that the study of the history of the Soviet-Finnish war should be based on *"the recognition that the Finns were fascist occupiers, that Finland waged a cruel racial war in Soviet Karelia, that anything human was alien to the occupying government, but monstrous the goal was, together with Nazi Germany, to wipe the Russians off the face of the earth"* [35]. Yes, such rhetoric would be quite appropriate in the front-line divisional "multi-circulation". In war, as in war, military propaganda at all times is based on the assertion that "anything human is alien to the enemy." Strange, however, are such statements in a scientific publication of 2006. It is also noteworthy that "a Finnish sociologist who has been living in St. Petersburg for months" founded the "Johan Beckman Institute" in Helsinki, under the auspices of which, in particular, N.I. Baryshnikov [39], which contains assessments and conclusions, albeit not so odious, but very far from scientific objectivity. It would seem that close cooperation between Russian and Finnish historians from two neighboring cities should only be welcomed, if it did not develop along the lines of an old anecdote, well known to everyone who was born in the USSR:

A Russian met an American and began to argue - who has more freedom in the country? Here I

am, says the American, I can go out onto the lawn in front of the White House and yell at the top of my lungs: "The President of America is a fool!" And I won't get

anything for it. Found something to surprise him, the Russian answers him, I can also go to Red Square in Moscow and yelling: "The President of America is a fool ..."

There are many examples of such a "joke" in the study of the history of the Finnish war. Helge Seppälä, a professional military and military historian, ended up in occupied Petrozavodsk at the age of 18 as a soldier of the Finnish army, where he served in 1942-1944. The dramatic experiences of those years prompted Mr. Seppälä to write a book entitled "Finland as an occupier" [27]. The appearance of Seppälä's book (more precisely, the author's extremely biased and one-sided approach to the problem under study) became the cause of a genuine public scandal in Finland. During the presentation of the book, even the police officers could not save the historian from the angry Finnish grandmothers, veterans of the women's volunteer organization Lotta Svärd [35]. It would seem that it was Russian

historians who could largely supplement and clarify the study of H. Seppälä. First of all, taking into account the fact that the territory occupied by Finnish troops was forcibly taken away from Finland as a result of the "winter war", a book should be written under the title "The Soviet Union as an occupier". The question of where the "local population" came from, which the Finnish invaders drove from their "native places" in 1941, is worthy of attention - if in the fierce cold of the winter of 1940, about 400 thousand people left with the retreating Finnish army, and on "liberated territories" left no more than 2 thousand local residents? [41] Seppälä's stories about difficult living conditions and meager food rations should have been supplemented with information about living conditions and the size of the rations on the other front line, in Soviet Karelia. For example, a memorandum from the head of the UNKVD of the Karelian-Finnish Republic dated June 11, 1942:

*"During May of this year. the population of the Pudozhsky district was given 200–300 g of bread per person with large interruptions. No other products were issued. Systematic malnutrition for two months created mass emaciation of a significant part of the population, and on the basis of this, an increase in mortality. In April of this year. 238 people died in the district, of which 67 were children under one year old. In connection with such phenomena, labor discipline has noticeably decreased in the region ... " [49].*

Finally, an objective discussion of the Finnish occupation regime is completely unthinkable without taking into account the main factor that caused such illegal and inhumane actions of the Finnish military authorities as the forced resettlement of the population and the creation of camps for displaced persons. We are talking, of course, about the so-called Karelian partisans, i.e. about the NKVD sabotage detachments that terrorized the civilian population of Finland and Karelia. In a word, the scope of work for Russian historians is enormous. Alas, so far everything has been limited to the translation into Russian and the publication of X. Seppälä's book, which is actively used as a collection of tendentious quotations.

Much more fame fell to the lot of another book. The Finnish historian, researcher at the Finnish Academy, Professor Mauno Jokipii wrote in 1987 a voluminous, 700-page study on the prehistory of the "continuation war" [26]. The historian set his goal to reveal "Finland's own contribution to the outbreak of war", which, in his opinion, "was not reported to the Finnish people either then or later." With great diligence and scrupulousness, Professor Jokipii collected all the facts and facts related to the German-Finnish military cooperation in 1940-1941. The conclusions reached by the author of the monograph boil down to the fact that "in a tense situation after the start of Barbarossa, the Soviet Union in

in the end, his nerves gave out and he struck first." In short, Finland once again "left the Soviet Union no other choice"...

One can argue about whether Jokipii's conclusions correspond to the facts that he himself collected in his study. In particular, the opinion has already been expressed that *"the view of the author of the monograph on the causes of the Soviet-Finnish war of 1941-1945. is completely refuted by documentary-historical material, detailed and conscientiously presented in his work"* [42]. The obvious inconsistency of the historian's position should also be noted. Clearly condemning the actions of the Finnish leadership, he at the same time states that *"they took the German path not without hesitation - there was no alternative to it."* And if "there was no alternative", then what is the subject of discussion and, moreover, political criticism? Finally, already in 1993, the same M. Jokipii, arguing on the pages of the Finnish newspaper *Keskisuomalainen* with the Soviet historian N.I. Baryshnikov, stated that *"if it had not been in 1939-1940. 'winter war', then, in all likelihood, during the German offensive in the autumn of 1941 on Leningrad, neutral Finland and a peaceful border along the Sestra River would be in its rear"* [43].

Attention should also be paid to the year of publication of the book (1987), and the inevitable lack of access for Professor Jokipii to that information about the plans and actions of the Soviet military-political leadership, which was declassified and introduced into scientific circulation in the mid-90s years. It would seem that it was modern Russian historians who should have supplemented the picture of the events of the last peaceful months of 1941 with those facts that "the Soviet people were not informed either then or later." Moreover, just with an invitation to such cooperation, Professor Jokipii ended his book: *"The discussion of that difficult time, of course, does not end there ... The third large-scale stage, based on the opening archives of Russia, is yet to come ... Only incorruptible memory can help the peoples, building their future on the foundation of the past. This, of course, equally applies to all sides of the former conflict"* [26].

"An incorruptible memory..." One can only be surprised at the ingenuous naivety of Western historians, who cannot (don't want to?) understand a simple fact: their current Russian "colleagues", whom they address with the words "Mr. Professor", are not "gentlemen", but the real "comrades", experienced fighters of the "ideological front of the party", who became "professors" in the departments of Marxism-Leninism and the history of the CPSU.

The appeal of Professor M. Jokipii was "heard" by them in the following way. In the year the book was published, no one in the USSR paid much attention to it. Soviet historiography did not then need a "collection of compromising evidence" on Finland's foreign policy - and without that "everyone knew" that Finland was to blame for everything. The situation changed 10 years later, when a public discussion about the role of the Stalinist empire in unleashing World War II became possible in post-perestroika Russia. In 1999, the monograph by M. Jokipii was remembered, translated and published in a non-Russian language. The bias showed up already on the cover, in the way the title of the book was translated. "Jaikosodan synty" literally means "the birth (emergence, creation) of a continuation war." But since in Soviet historiography the use of the term "continuation war" was equated with an act of "ideological sabotage", the title of Jokipii's book was translated as "Finland on the Road to War". Ultimately

M.Jokipia's monumental work was torn into "quotations", the biased use of which now "decorates" almost every publication devoted to the topic of June 25, 1941. Further - more.

In 2003, Professor V.N. Baryshnikov (the son of the aforementioned N.I. Baryshnikov) published a book entitled "Finland's Entry into World War II. 1940–1941" [44]. In general, the book is a 326-page "indictment on the case of Finland", in which abundantly quoted fragments from the works of Jokipii and Seppälä are harmoniously supplemented by the memoirs of the former resident of Stalin's intelligence E. Sinitsin. For example, there is a conversation overheard in the building of the Finnish mission in Moscow, the participants of which *"spoke quite definitely that in the event of a German attack on the Soviet Union, Finland would not be on the Russian side."* Very interesting. Did the bosses of those who installed the bugs count on something else? They hoped that the robbed and raped Finland would rush to save the rapist? But what is most surprising is that three years later, the same V.N. Baryshnikov wrote that *"the Finnish leadership had no other options for political development, except to follow the path of military-political cooperation with Germany."* [35]. In general, the situation that has developed in the modern Russian historiography of the "continuation

war" can be described with such a figurative comparison. Imagine a television report about a duel between two boxers, from which one of the participants was removed using computer graphics (the technology of today allows this quite well). What will we see on the screen? A hefty fellow with a face twisted from inexplicable anger jumps in an absurd pose around the ring and at the same time waves his fists in ugly gloves ... This is how the actions of the Finnish leaders in the last pre-war months are depicted: Kiel, conduct secret negotiations with the German generals, begin covert mobilization... What does the SECOND PARTY of the future conflict do? Is she engaged exclusively in "peaceful creative work"? **The purpose of this study is to "bring the second boxer back into the ring"**. At the same time, the author does not in the least pretend to be an arbiter, and even more so, the role of a "prosecutor" who

decides whether the actions of the Finnish leadership were adequate to the real threat, or whether it (the leadership) went beyond the scope of necessary self-defense. Moreover, the "Finnish component" of the issue will be considered only to the smallest extent. And not only because it is more natural and easier for a Russian historian to study documents of the history of his country, compiled in Russian. It's just that in the USSR-Finland pair, the leading role inevitably belonged to a huge world power of 200 million, while Finland could only more or less successfully respond to the actions of its mighty neighbor. The efforts of Russian researchers should probably be distributed in the same proportion. Otherwise, we find ourselves in a situation about which two thousand years ago it was said: "A hypocrite! Why are you looking for the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the beam in your own eye?"

Of all the huge variety of issues related to the history of the Soviet-Finnish confrontation in 1940–1941, this paper will consider

only a small part of them, namely: strategic planning, operational deployment and combat operations of the Red Army in the first weeks of the war (June-July 1941). Particular attention will be paid to the events of June 25, 1941, i.e. that massive strike of Soviet aviation on Finnish targets, which served as a pretext for declaring war. Without trying to embrace the immensity, the author, nevertheless, considered it necessary to supplement the main material with a brief, concise presentation of the history of Soviet-Finnish relations in 1918–1939. and an equally brief overview of the course of the hostilities of the "winter war" and the summer campaign of 1944. All this will allow us to include the dramatic events of the summer of 1941 in the general historical

context.

The choice of just such a "military" angle of view has two reasons. The first is related to the nature of the sources used by the author - these are mainly documents from military archives: the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense (TsAMO, Podolsk) and the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA, Moscow). The second reason deserves more explanation. The fact is that the

Soviet-Finnish war, which began on June 25, 1941, took place within the framework of another, big war, being its integral part. The Red Army, which in July 1941 fought in Karelia, is the same army, with the same weapons, the same command staff, the same system of combat training as the Baltic, Western armies defeated in the summer of the same 1941 and Kiev military districts. The reasons for their defeat to this day remain at the center of a fierce scientific and public discussion. As is known, the following reasons are mentioned more often than others: - a sudden attack by the enemy; - non-mobilization of units and formations of the troops of the western districts; - technical superiority of weapons of the German army and aviation; - the first and sudden strike on airfields based on Soviet aviation,

allowing the German Air Force to immediately seize air supremacy;

- two years of experience in modern warfare, accumulated by the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe at the time of the invasion of the USSR.

We will not digress now to discuss the reliability of these theses. A number of modern Russian historians (including the author of this book) have shown in detail and with arguments the erroneous, if not deliberately false, nature of these statements [47, 48]. For the purposes of this study, something else is much more important. If we look at the entire above list of "causes" of the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army, we find that none of these factors can be applied to describe the course of hostilities (i.e., the defeat of the Red Army) on the "Finnish front". No one. The Soviet side began the fighting, and it started with a sudden air strike on Finnish airfields. The active phase of the combat operations of the ground troops began in the first days of July, i.e.

10 days after the announcement of open mobilization in the USSR (not to mention the covert mobilization and deployment of troops of the Leningrad Military District, which will be discussed later). You don't even have to talk about any "technical superiority" of the impoverished Finnish army. As for the "experience in waging a modern war," both opposing sides acquired it at the same time.



and at the same time and in the same place - on the snow-covered battlefields of the "winter war" of 1939-1940.

Thus, **the study of the course of hostilities on the Finnish front gives us a unique opportunity to look at the Red Army of the 1941 model in the most favorable conditions for it:** the troops mobilized in advance begin combat operations at the moment chosen by them, according to the plans of their own command, against an enemy that is significantly inferior in technical terms. equipment. We can say that the analysis of the real events of the Finnish war can serve as a "time machine" that allows you to answer the sacramental question of Soviet history: "What would happen if there was no surprise attack by the Germans on the morning of June 22, 1941?"

Before finally proceeding to the presentation of the main material, it remains only define terms.

In order to avoid accusations of bias, the author proposes to use in the future to designate the events of June-November 1941 an absolutely neutral, non-judgmental definition: "2nd Soviet-Finnish War". Respectively. the fighting in the summer of 1944 will be called the "3rd Soviet-Finnish War." Thus, this study is devoted to the history of the beginning of the 2nd Soviet-Finnish war. The term "Finnish" (Finnish army, Finnish war, Finnish

aviation) accepted and established in Russian historical literature will be used in this book. But at the same time, one should not forget that the term "Finlandian" would be politically correct and historically true (Finland is a bilingual country, and in addition to the Finns, citizens of many nationalities fought in its army, and during the days of the "winter war" - and numerous foreign volunteers).

Certain difficulties are also created by the metamorphoses of the toponymy of the theater of military operations. At the beginning of the 2nd Soviet-Finnish War, most of the territory of the Karelian Isthmus was part of the Karelian-Finnish SSR. Throughout the territory of the K FSSR, the former (Finnish) geographical names were preserved, therefore, when reading the documents of the command of the Leningrad Military District, we see a scattering of difficult-to-pronounce Finnish toponyms. After the end of the 3rd Soviet-Finnish War, the entire Karelian Isthmus was transferred to the Leningrad Region, and its toponymy was radically "Russified" in 1949 as well. Kexholm turned into Priozersk, Koivisto - into Primorsk, Enso - into Svetogorsk, Antrea - into Kamennogorsk, etc. It is noteworthy that on the Onega-Ladoga Isthmus (i.e., within the administrative boundaries of the present Karelian ASSR), Vuontelenmyäki, Pitkyäranta, Naistenjärvi and other places remained with their original names.

The system adopted in this book is that geographical names will always be given as they appeared in the original documents, with modern names in parentheses. The words "Ladoga Karelia" will mean the territory of the northeastern coast of Lake Ladoga (Sortavala, Pitkyäranta, Olonets) and the Onega-Ladoga Isthmus (Loymola, Suoyarvi, Petrozavodsk). The territory north of Lake Onega (Medvezhyegorsk, Reboly, Kem, Kestenga) will be called White Sea Karelia. Triangle of land between the Gulf of Finland and the western shore of Lake Ladoga (Vyborg, Kexholm,

Leningrad) we will call it the way it was called in the documents of the Soviet command: the Karelian Isthmus or in short - Karpereshek.

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The book uses documents and materials collected as a result of many years of work by the leading and compilers of Internet sites: "Military Literature" ([militera.lib.ru](http://militera.lib.ru)), "Mechcorps of the Red Army" ([mechcorps.rkka.ru](http://mechcorps.rkka.ru)), "Corner of the Sky" ([airwar.ru](http://airwar.ru)), Workers' and Peasants' Red Army ([rkka.ru](http://rkka.ru)), Soldier ([soldat.ru](http://soldat.ru)), World War II ([weltkrieg.ru](http://weltkrieg.ru)), [www.ilpilot.narod.ru](http://www.ilpilot.narod.ru), [www.eismeerfront.com](http://www.eismeerfront.com), [www.battlefield.ru](http://www.battlefield.ru), [www.depvladimir.narod.ru](http://www.depvladimir.narod.ru).

## **Part 1**

### **FIRST ATTEMPT**

## Chapter

### 1.1 FINLAND, KARELIA, RUSSIA

The mutual and mostly peaceful coexistence of the East Slavic and Finno-Ugric peoples has a long history. Much has already been forgotten, lost in the mists of time. Few people today will remember that the deaf Murom forests, in which the dashing Nightingale the robber whistled from the old Russian epics, got their name from the Finnish Murom tribe. And Lake Peipsi, on the banks of which the Russian prince Alexander Nevsky performed his feats of arms, is named after the Finnish Chud tribe. Yes, and the toponym "Moscow", according to most experts, is of Finnish origin. As for interstate relations between Russia and sovereign independent Finland, they are surprisingly young - they are not yet 100 years old. Until 1917, the territory of the traditional settlement of the *Suomalaiset* people (Suomi people), which was formed at the beginning of the 2nd millennium of a new era on the basis of the merger of the sum, em, korela tribal groups, was part of the Swedish kingdom, and later the Russian Empire. The oldest of the reliably known borders was established by the Oreshkovets peace treaty of 1323, concluded between Veliky Novgorod and Sweden. According to this agreement, the southern and eastern parts of the Karelian Isthmus (with the city of Korela, aka Kexholm, aka Kyakisalmi, aka the current Priozersk) were recognized as Novgorod lands. The first step on the long road of

conquering Finland was taken by Peter the Great: the war between Russia and Sweden (the so-called Northern War) that lasted 21 years over vast expanses from the Baltic to Poltava (the so-called Northern War) ended in 1721 with the signing of the Treaty of Nystadt, according to which the Karelian Isthmus (within the approximate borders of modern Leningrad region) went to Russia. The long-term devastating war equally devastated both Russian and Finnish lands: a quarter of the peasant farms of Finland were abandoned, and the "glorious era of the tsar-reformer" cost Russia a one-third reduction in the population ... A new series of Russian-Swedish wars waged by half-Germans and Germans, succeeding each other on the Russian throne, ended in 1809 with the inclusion of the entire territory of modern Finland into the Russian Empire. True, the conditions and procedure for this inclusion were very unconventional. The Finnish lands became part of the empire as a single entity, which received the sonorous name "The Grand Duchy of Finland". And although the title of Grand Duke of Finland went to the Russian emperor, Finland itself received the rights of broad autonomy. At the first meeting of the Assembly of Representatives

of the 4 Estates (Seim of Finland) in the city of Porvoo, a special manifesto was read out, in which Alexander I solemnly proclaimed special favors: Finland retained its Lutheran religion, its former (i.e. Swedish) laws, the judicial system and local self-government. The tsar promised to introduce new laws or change the old ones only with the consent of the Sejm. Administrative autonomy was complemented by economic autonomy: Finland had a separate customs, a separate budget and tax system from the all-Russian one, and since 1878, its own separate monetary system. The concrete filling of all these autonomous rights with real content has continuously changed in accordance with

changes in the internal and external political environment. From 1820 to 1863 the Seimas never met, and in 1850 a ban was introduced on the publication of books in Finnish (except for agricultural and religious literature). The era of liberal reforms in the 60s significantly changed the situation in Finland: the school reform (1866) eliminated church control over primary education and introduced instruction in Finnish; the new Charter of the Seimas (1869) established the frequency of obligatory convocations of the Seimas (once every 5 years, and since 1882 - once every 3 years); the city reform (1873) established the electivity of local governments.

The political reaction of the era of the reign of Alexander III was also not slow to affect Finland. In February 1899, by a special manifesto, the Russian emperor arrogated to himself the right to issue laws binding on Finland without the consent of the Sejm. An active policy aimed at the almost complete elimination of autonomous rights and the forcible Russification of Finland was pursued by the Governor-General Bobrikov, who left behind a long and unkind memory. Forty years later, in the chorus of the famous Finnish song of the war years, the phrase was repeated as a refrain: *"No, Molotov, no, Molotov! You lie even more than Bobrikov..."* The 1905 revolution radically changed the situation both in Russia and in Finland. On October 22, Nicholas II was forced to sign a manifesto on the abolition of all laws of the tsarist government adopted after February 1899 without the consent of the Sejm. On June 20, 1906, a new Charter of the Seimas of Finland was adopted, which provided for the elimination of the system of estate representation and the creation of a unicameral parliament, elected on the basis of universal direct equal suffrage by all citizens from the age of 24. It is worth noting that already in the parliamentary elections of 1907, the Finnish Social Democrats won 80 seats out of 200, and in the elections in 1916 more than half - 103 seats out of 200. A people whose national character has become synonymous with calmness and cold-blooded prudence. made a choice in favor of social progress within the framework of law and order, while extremist sentiments were rapidly growing on the other side of the border (as you know, in the first and only elections to the Constituent Assembly of Russia, the left-wing radicals - Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks - won a resounding victory, bringing together more than four-fifths of the popular vote).

The line of the administrative border of the Grand Duchy of Finland did not remain unchanged in the 19th century. In

1811, the Vyborg province (i.e. the Karelian Isthmus) was transferred to Finland. In 1864, Emperor Alexander II decided to once again correct the border and transferred the town of Sestroretsk (30 km from St. *treasury of the Russian Sestroretsk Arms Plant are Russian subjects and are unfamiliar with the language and legal provisions of Finland*"). At the same time, the town of Pechenga (Petsamo), with its nickel storerooms hidden under permafrost, was included in Finland. This whole story cannot but evoke associations with the deeds of Nikita Khrushchev, who with one stroke of the pen transferred the Crimean peninsula from one part of the Soviet empire (RSFSR) to another (Ukrainian SSR), not for a moment thinking that all empires are not eternal ...

The Russian Empire collapsed at the end of 1917, unable to withstand the stress of a bloody world war and internal unrest. In the conditions of growing chaos in Russia, the Finnish parliament on December 6, 1917 adopted a declaration declaring Finland an independent state. December 31 (hereinafter all dates are given according to the new calendar) 1917 The Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR recognized the independence of Finland, January 4, 1918 the decision of the Council of People's Commissars was approved by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. The ease and speed with which Lenin's government resolved the centuries-old issue of creating a sovereign Finnish state was not accidental. They fully corresponded to the course towards the most complete destruction of all state structures of the Russian Empire, which the Bolsheviks who seized power pursued in all directions. And in this sense, the slogan "the right of nations to self-determination up to secession" was in no way inferior in effectiveness to the already ingenious "rob the loot". Lenin clearly understood that the "time to scatter stones" had come, and the more and further they were scattered, the easier it would be for him. hold on to power in the central foothold that remains under his control. *"The question of how to determine the state border now, for a while - for we are striving for the complete destruction of state borders - is not a main, not important, secondary question. We can and should wait with this question"* (V.I. Lenin, PSS, vol. 40, p. 43). *"For an internationalist, the issue of state borders is a secondary issue, if not a tenth one ... Other issues are important, the main interests of the proletarian dictatorship are important"* (V.I. Lenin, PSS, vol. 40, p. 19). This cunning "dialectic" was a key (more correctly, a thieves'

master key) with the help of which the reverse "collection of stones" was later successfully carried out. Ensuring the "basic interests of the proletarian dictatorship" required, of course, the expansion of the territory and the multiplication of the population under the rule of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", which dictatorship found its most adequate and complete expression in the dictatorship of the only truly proletarian party, i.e. the party of Lenin himself (soon this party became quite officially called the "party of Lenin-Stalin"). And insofar as "the question of the borders of states is a question of ten degrees", then it was possible and should have expanded the territory of the "world's first state of workers and peasants" without paying any attention to the outdated, "temporary" borders of other states. There was only one flaw in this whole flawless scheme: other countries and peoples had not yet been imbued with revolutionary proletarian consciousness and therefore were not ready to ignore their borders and their state interests. To overcome this "irconsciousness" the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army was created, into which by June 15, 1920, 6.7 million people were forcibly mobilized (9. p. 44). Relying on such overwhelming military power. Soviet Russia by the end of 1921 helped to establish a genuine "proletarian dictatorship" - i.e. occupied the territory and liquidated the national authorities - in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and in all other large and small "republics", whose independence Lenin recognized with extraordinary ease in 1917-1919.

By all the logic of events, the same fate awaited independent Finland. Moreover, if Armenia, Bukhara or any "Semirechye Republic" from

Many thousands of kilometers separated Central Russia, while Finland was very close to the main center of the Bolshevik dictatorship, revolutionary Petrograd, and in Helsingfors (Helsinki) crowds of sailors of the Baltic Fleet, drunk on alcohol, cocaine and permissiveness, rioted. In total, at least 40 thousand Russian soldiers and sailors were in Finland in connection with the still ongoing world war. The anarchy, into which the Russian army finally plunged by the end of 1917, undoubtedly reduced the importance of the Russian troops in Finland as a combat unit - but it was an excellent source of "orphan" weapons and "activists" for the emerging Red Guard, whose strength by the end of January was already 30 thousand people [22]. The leadership of the Finnish Social Democratic Party was completely at a loss, thus repeating the tragic experience of the Russian "Mensheviks". On the night of January 28, 1918, a revolution broke out in Helsinki. In the first hours, events developed in full accordance with the Petrograd October model: Red Guard detachments began by seizing banks, bridges and railway stations, and government institutions. In a few days, the rebels took control of the capital and the main centers of the southern industrialized part of the country: Turku, Tampere, Vyborg. The legal government, formed by parliament on November 26, 1917, was forced to flee north to the peasant regions of Finland. This development of events found enthusiastic support in Soviet Russia. Echelons with weapons and Baltic sailors went to help the Red

Guard of Finland. For an offensive on the Karelian Isthmus, from the line of the Vuoksi River. in Petrograd, detachments of the Red Guard numbering 10 thousand people were formed. The nominal commander of "all the armed forces of Finland" was the former ensign Ezro Haapalainen, but in fact the Finnish Red Guard was commanded by a colonel of the Russian army Svechnikov. A variety of military assistance was supplemented by political and diplomatic assistance: on March 1, 1918, in Petrograd, with the leaders of the armed rebellion, the "Treaty on Strengthening Friendship and Brotherhood between the RSFSR and the Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic" was signed. I. Dzhugashvili Stalin was among the "authorized representatives" who signed this agreement. This is how the name of the future ruler of the Soviet empire was recorded. Another interesting detail is that in clause 18 of the Treaty, the right to resolve all disagreements arising between Soviet Russia and "socialist Finland" was transferred to such an authoritative arbitration court, "whose chairman is *appointed by petition of the Swedish Left Social Democratic Party*" [37]. Everything seemed to be moving towards the fact that at the appointed hour "socialist workers' Finland" would enter the "fraternal family of Soviet republics." But that did not happen. Why? It is unlikely that history allows us to find precise and unambiguous answers to such questions. But one of the many reasons we can name. This name will be unusually long for Russian hearing: Carl Gustav Emil Baron Mannerheim.

Thousands of books and articles have been written about this man, who left such a bright mark on many events of the turbulent and crazy 20th century. Many of them have been translated into Russian, for example [68, 69]. Mannerheim erected the brightest literary monument to himself by writing his famous "Memoirs" [22]. Without trying to embrace the immensity, we note only a few moments important for our study from the enchanting life story of K.G. Mannerheim.



He was born on June 4, 1867 in the family estate of the Swedish barons Mannerheim in southwestern Finland, not far from Turku. The great-grandfather of the future marshal, Karl Erik Mannerheim, in 1807 led a delegation that successfully held difficult negotiations in St. Petersburg on the conditions for the transition of Finland from Sweden to the Russian Empire. The father of the future marshal, Baron Karl Robert Mannerheim, married Helen von Yulin, the daughter of a Swedish industrialist (probably of German origin). Seven children were born in their family. The native language of Karl and Helen was Swedish, but, wanting to give their children a brilliant European education, they constantly spoke to them in English and French. It was allowed to switch to native and familiar Swedish only on Sundays! The future marshal and president of Finland learned Finnish already in adulthood as a foreign language and spoke it with a noticeable accent until the end of his days (his memoirs were written in Swedish and translated into Finnish). The title of nobility and family estate did not at all provide the young Carl Gustav with a comfortable existence: his father, having gone bankrupt to the hilt on unsuccessful commercial transactions, left for Paris with his mistress in 1880, leaving his family without a livelihood. Unable to withstand such a shock, the next year his mother died, and the 14-year-old boy was left virtually an orphan. Relatives attached Karl Gustav to a cadet school, most likely because education and maintenance there was free.

The future marshal was expelled from the cadet school in Khamin for ugly behavior and unauthorized night trips to the city. In 1887, having learned Russian in one year, Carl Gustav entered the prestigious Nicholas Cavalry School in St. Petersburg. In the capital of the empire, a tall, handsome, multi-talented offspring of a Swedish baronial family made a dizzying career. Two years after graduating from military studies in 1891, he was enlisted in the elite Life Guards Cavalry Regiment, and at the coronation ceremony of Nicholas II in 1896, Mannerheim pranced at the head of a solemn procession. As befits a brilliant aristocrat, Mannerheim was a great connoisseur and connoisseur of thoroughbred horses. This passion, as well as wide connections in high society, allowed Gustav Karlovich (that's how his name was spelled in Russia) at the age of 30 to get a high position in the management of the royal stables. He personally bought racehorses for the royal family and even received an audience with the German Emperor Wilhelm in connection with the fulfillment of these instructions. When the Russo-Japanese War began, Mannerheim managed to be sent to the active army. The captain returned from the Japanese front with the rank of colonel. In 1906, the General Staff ordered Baron Mannerheim to lead a secret expedition, which was supposed to study the Sino-Tibetan theater of war under the guise of ethnographic research. The expedition lasted two years, and after its successful completion, Mannerheim was awarded an audience with the Russian emperor, which instead of the established 20 minutes lasted more than an hour and a half. Mannerheim met the beginning of the First World War in the rank of major general and the position of commander of the Life Guards of His Majesty the Warsaw Cavalry Brigade, in 1916, already in the rank of lieutenant general, he commanded a cavalry corps in Brusilov's army.

For a total of 30 years, the Swedish baron served faithfully in the Russian army. Probably, he can be called a Russian general on the same grounds that a commander was considered Russian in the multinational Russian Empire.

Bagration, navigator Krusenstern, writer von Vizin, linguist Dal, artist Levitan, Minister Witte. In any case, General Mannerheim was no less "Russian" than a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party I. Dzhugashvili (Stalin). Mannerheim's deep, sincere and enduring hatred of the Bolsheviks had nothing to do with Finnish chauvinism, much less with any form of Russophobia. And what kind of Russophobia could we talk about, taking into account the national composition of the Bolshevik leadership, made up for the most part of Jews, Georgians, Poles, Latvians, Hungarians ...

The portrait of Mannerheim would become much more attractive by the standards of the 21st century if we could say that only the deep democratic convictions of the general turned him away from the totalitarian ideology and practice of communism. But that won't be true. The deep hostility that Mannerheim felt for the Russian Bolsheviks, and then for the German fascists, was nothing more than a natural rejection of the lawless power of the unbridled mob on the part of a brilliant aristocrat. In his political views, Baron Mannerheim was more of a supporter of an "enlightened" constitutional monarchy than parliamentary democracy, and "freedom", which he often speaks of in his memoirs, was understood by him (in our opinion) as the duty of the aristocratic elite freely assumed to take care of the good of society. The way she (the elite) understands this good. But it was precisely the readiness for an active and, if necessary, sacrificial fulfillment by the aristocracy of its duty to the Motherland that Mannerheim did not see in Russia engulfed in revolutionary madness. His attempts to organize Russian officers to repulse the wave of soldier anarchy stumbled upon a wall of indifference and cowardice. In December 1917, Mannerheim left Russia (as it turned out, forever). He arrived in Finland, "freed" from all movable and immovable property, with a Russian orderly and a portrait of Nicholas II, which portrait invariably stood on his desktop. After reviewing the state of affairs in the country, Mannerheim came to an encouraging conclusion: *"our country had more opportunities to save culture and the social system than Russia. There I observed only a lack of faith and passivity, while in the Motherland I felt the inescapable desire of people to fight for freedom"* [22]. The government of Svinhufvud instructed the Russian General Mannerheim to create (practically from scratch) a regular

army. which could withstand the Finnish and Russian detachments of the Red Guard, and the Swedish baron took up this business, investing in it all his vast military experience and passion of a remarkable nature. One of Mannerheim's orders (given ironically on February 23, 1918, the day that in the Soviet Union will be called "Soviet Army Day") was: *"... Lenin's government, which promised independence to Finland with one hand, sent its troops and to conquer their youngsters, as they themselves declared, Finland back and suppress the young freedom of Finland with the help of our Red Guards with blood ... We do not need to accept, as alms, the land that belongs to us, connected with us by blood ties, and I swear on the name of the Finnish peasant army, the commander-in-chief which I have the honor to be, that I will not sheathe my sword before legal order reigns in the country, before all the fortifications are in our hands, before the last Leninist soldier and bandit is expelled both from Finland and from White Sea Karelia..."* [37].

Another important point for us is the thesis diligently replicated by Soviet (and post-Soviet) historiography about Mannerheim's Germanophilism and the supposedly decisive role of the Germans in suppressing the "proletarian revolution" in Finland. The origin of this myth is more than understandable - in this way the "bridge" was thrown from 1918 to 1941, and the forced union of social democratic Finland with Nazi Germany (the causes, content and consequences of which will be discussed in part 2) was presented as a natural continuation "anti-Soviet course of the henchman of the Finnish bourgeoisie towards an alliance with German fascism. In fact, the first and only condition that Mannerheim, assuming command of the White Army of Finland in January 1918, put before the head of the Finnish government, Svinhufvud, was that the government would in no case turn to Germany for military assistance in suppressing red rebellion. When it turned out that the government of Svinhufvud did not fulfill its promise and turned to the Germans behind the back of the commander-in-chief, Mannerheim at least ensured that the German troops were transferred under his command. Here is how he describes these events in his Memoirs: *"My first thought was to resign. If the Senate deceived me, then it could not demand that I continue to fulfill my duties ... Gradually, a new decision matured in me ... Having weighed all the pros and cons, I decided to remain in my post and try to maintain loyal cooperation in the future with the Senate ... On March 5, I sent a telegram to the Quartermaster General of Germany, Erich von Ludendorff ... First of all, the German units immediately after landing on the territory of Finland should obey the Finnish High Command ... If these conditions were accepted, it was said at the end of the telegram, I can declare from the army Finland, that we welcome the brave German battalions in our country and are ready to express gratitude to them on behalf of the whole people ... "* [22].

Mannerheim wrote his memoirs in the middle of the 20th century, when many of the participants and eyewitnesses of these events were still alive, nevertheless, none of them questioned the authenticity of this whole story. In any case, there is no doubt that exactly two weeks after the "victory parade" of the white army in Helsinki, on May 30, 1918, Mannerheim renounced all leadership positions and left the country in protest against the intention of the Svinhufvud government to transfer the reorganization Finnish army into the hands of German generals. He told the members of the Senate the motives for his decision in very energetic terms: *"Let no one even think that I, who created the army and led practically untrained, poorly armed troops to victory only thanks to the fighting spirit of the Finnish soldiers and the loyalty of the officers, will now submit and sign those orders as the German military administration deems necessary."*

The reasons for Mannerheim's anti-German orientation are also quite understandable. The point here is not only in the Anglophilism instilled from childhood, not only in the hostility towards the Germans, natural for a Russian general during the First World War. Unlike the political leaders of a very young Finnish state, with their, alas, provincial education and horizons, Mannerheim, only by virtue of his vast life experience and personal connections with leading European politicians, understood that Germany was on the verge of defeat in the war and death. In the outer

Finland's policy should have been guided by an alliance with the Anglo-French American bloc countries, to which Mannerheim strenuously (and ultimately quite successfully) sought an alliance. On December 12, 1918, Svinhufvud was forced to resign, and Parliament appointed Mannerheim as regent (Finland was then still formally considered a constitutional monarchy). The appointment took place in absentia, since the regent himself was on a semi-official visit to Western Europe, where he was able, having mobilized his old acquaintances, to hold important negotiations with the heads of the foreign affairs departments of the Entente countries and get them to provide Finland with emergency

food aid. As for the influence of the German "intervention" on the course and outcome of the civil war in Finland, the facts are as follows. The German troops consisted of one understaffed division of General Goltz, numbering 7,000 men, which landed at Hanko on April 3, and an even more understaffed infantry brigade of Colonel Brandenstein, numbering 2,000 men, which landed at Lovisa (a village on the coast of the Gulf of Finland about 100 km east of Helsinki) April 7 [22]. Total 9 thousand bayonets. The largest grouping of the Red Guard, the so-called northern army of about 25 thousand people, had already been defeated by the White Army by this time during fierce two-week battles near the city of Tampere. But even after that, at the time of the arrival of the Germans in early April 1918, the forces of the Red Guard consisted, according to Mannerheim, of 70 thousand people, including 30 thousand in local detachments poorly prepared for combat operations [22]. Even with all the reservations that the division of the regular German army in battle was in many ways superior to the hastily armed Red Guard detachments, there is no need to talk about some kind of "decisive" contribution of the German troops to the victory of the White Army.

Finally, when discussing the reasons for the appearance of German troops on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, it should be noted that the government of Lenin-Trotsky-Stalin bears an incomparably greater responsibility for this than the Finnish government of Svinhufvud. The civil war in Finland unfolded in the context of a major all-European war. The turning point in this war was the separate Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germany and Soviet Russia. In accordance with the terms of the separate agreement, German troops received the right to occupy Ukraine, most of Belarus, and Lithuania. Latvia, Estonia. And Finland. *"The revolutionary sailors of the Russian Baltic Fleet,"* writes Mannerheim, *"in accordance with the agreement between Russia and Germany, signed on April 5, left Helsinki."* In fact, Mannerheim and his white army significantly reduced the scale of German intervention and **prevented the occupation of all of Finland**, which occupation could be a completely logical conclusion to the mysterious story of the "interaction" of the Bolsheviks and Kaiser Wilhelm ...

Let us return, however, from the turbulent vicissitudes of the amazing fate of Baron Mannerheim to a short history of "socialist workers' Finland." To do this, we will have to quote another fragment from the Marshal's Memoirs: *"On the evening of April 25, 1918, the members of the rebellious government and the dictator Manner made a decision that does not honor them: they fled and left their troops to their fate. This happened on the night of the 26th: the top leaders of the rebellious movement boarded three ships and set off (from Vyborg. - M.S.) towards Petrograd. For that*

*To ensure that the flight went smoothly, the dictator in his last order demanded that the coastline be guarded at all costs."* In Soviet

Russia, the "Red Finns" were waiting for a lot of things. First of all, the continuation of the struggle for the "basic interests of the proletarian dictatorship" required the creation of a truly revolutionary party. Not like the Finnish social democracy turned out to be, which at the decisive moment could not take the side of the anti-constitutional rebellion. On August 25-29, 1918, the "Communist Party of Finland" was established in Moscow. The aforementioned K. Manner and Comrade O. Kuusinen, who has yet to be repeatedly mentioned on the pages of this book, turned out to be among the leaders of the party. The fact that a political party, intending to take full power in Finland, was being formed in Moscow, no longer surprised anyone at that crazy time (*"the question of state borders is a secondary issue, if not a tenth one ..."*) For the sake of truth, it must be clarified that not all the

"highest leaders" fled from the sinking ship of the revolution to a steamship sailing for Petrograd. One of the two authorized representatives of the revolutionary government, who signed on March 1, 1918 "an agreement on strengthening friendship and fraternity," E. Gylding remained in Vyborg until the last minute, and then, miraculously escaping arrest, arrived in Soviet Russia by a long detour through Stockholm. Even more confusing was the life path of the second "signer", O. Tokoya. Here we return again to the events connected with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and its paradoxical foreign policy consequences. After the German troops came to Finland to help the white

government of Svinhufvud, and occupied all of Estonia on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland and reached Narva, the Western allies (England, France and the USA) were seriously concerned about the possibility of German troops appearing in northern Russia, in particular in the ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, where there were huge stockpiles of military equipment that the Entente had previously sent to its ally, which was now an ally of Germany. On March 6, 1918, the English "interveners" landed - in agreement with the Socialist-Revolutionary Soviet of Workers' Deputies - in Murmansk. This fact (the consent of the Soviet) clearly spoiled the orderly scheme of Soviet historiography. They found a way out in the fact that the responsibility for inviting the British was blamed on the worst enemy of the people, Trotsky, from whom, as everyone knows, any dirty tricks could be expected. In any case, with or without Trotsky, the number of interventionist troops was 130 (one hundred and thirty) marines. Only in mid-June, reinforcements arrived in Murmansk: 600 British soldiers and a battalion of Serbian infantry. With new forces, the English

commander, Major General Maynard, on June 27, 1918, decided to organize an expedition to the south - however, not in order to "drown the power of the workers and peasants in blood", but to throw back the "White Finns", whom the British not without reason considered the allies of Germany. The reconnaissance data turned out to be erroneous, and there were no Finnish troops in the Kandalaksha-Kem sector. Instead, the British stumbled upon a train of Russian Red Guards, whose condition seemed to Maynard threatening order and tranquility in the region. Out of harm's way, the Red Guards were disarmed and sent back to Petrograd by the same train [45].

Despite such a successful start of the "intervention", the available forces of the allies were completely insufficient to control the vast territory of the Kola Peninsula and northern Karelia. On the other hand, Kaiser Germany was very worried about the appearance of Entente troops in the ice-free ports of northern Europe. During the

negotiations that took place from 3 to 27 August 1918 in Berlin, an additional agreement was concluded to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, in accordance with Art. 5 of which Soviet Russia undertook to *"immediately take all measures to remove the combat forces of the Entente from the North of Russia"* [67]. Thus, **from a separate peace with Germany, the Lenin government was already moving on to military cooperation** with the former enemy of Russia. In such a situation, the seemingly incredible strengthening of cooperation between the Entente and the "Red Finns" became a reality.

As early as May 4, 1918, a few days before the final collapse, the leadership of the "Red Finns" (Council of People's Deputies) sent two of its representatives to Murmansk to negotiate with the Allied command.

On May 28, an agreement was reached that the Finnish Red Guard in the north of Karelia would begin joint military operations with the Allies, and they would take on the responsibility of training, arming and supplying the Finns. The military unit created in this way was called the Finnish Legion. The number of the "legion" was initially five thousand, and by the spring of 1919 it increased to 1200 people - former fighters of the Finnish Red Guard, who could now be called "red-white" Finns. In the summer of 1918, O. Tokoi and a group of comrades also joined the Finnish Legion. After it was not possible to persuade him to break with the Entente and return to Moscow, the Central Committee of the Finnish Communist Party at the end of September sentenced O. Tokoi to death (a decision that usually does not fall within the competence of the Central Committee of a political party), and the execution of the sentence was announced *"the duty of every revolutionary worker"* [45].

But the "Finnish Legion" was not the first Finnish armed detachment to take part in the fratricidal war flaring up in the vast expanses of Karelia. Even before the beginning of all the revolutions, about a thousand Finnish workers, mostly carpenters and lumberjacks, were employed at work along the Murmansk railway. In the first days of February 1918, the number of Finns began to grow rapidly due to refugees who rushed across the Russian border from the northern regions of Finland occupied by the "whites". On February 3, at a meeting of Finnish workers in Kandalaksha, it was decided to create an armed detachment, which later received the name "Northern Expedition". The detachment was headed by a former non-commissioned officer of the tsarist army, a talented (as subsequent events showed) organizer and commander I. Akhavo, a Karelian from the village of Ukhta (now Kalevala). The train with rifles and cartridges provided by the Soviet government (!) arrived in Kandalaksha on March 18. Armed with these weapons, the "Northern Expedition" defeated one of the two groups of Finnish "white" volunteers, who in March 1918, in agreement with Mannerheim's headquarters, invaded the territory of the White Sea Karelia (one detachment, numbering 1000 bayonets, unsuccessfully tried to break through to Kandalaksha, the second, numbering 350 people, advanced from Suomussalmi to Ukhta). Gradually, the

local Karelian population was also drawn into civil strife. As early as July 1917, a kind of unauthorized "congress" took place in Ukhta, at which a

a draft state structure for the autonomous Karelian region, drawn up in the form of a petition of the population of Karelia to the future Constituent Assembly of Russia. This idea died before the Bolsheviks dispersed the Constituent Assembly in January 1918. Further more. On March 17-18, 1918, in the same Ukhta, a congress of representatives of several volosts was held, at which a decision was made to withdraw the White Sea Karelia from Russia. The congress proposed some complex formula for political accession to Finland, in which, economically, Karelia should, however, remain a completely separate region, its natural resources should be exclusively owned by the Karelian people, and its citizens should not take part in the civil war in Finland. Such "congresses", at which self-proclaimed "republics" were created and dissolved, were not a novelty for the situation of

the legal vacuum that the Bolshevik coup and the dispersal of the popularly elected Constituent Assembly created on the territory of the former Russian Empire. The real power in 1918 was created not by a "congress with a resolution", but by a detachment of armed people numbering several hundred people. Several thousand, and even with a dozen Maxim machine guns, became the supreme power. By the end of 1918, the Karelian regiment became such a power in the White Sea Karelia. The Karelian regiment was created with the support of the same tireless English General Maynard in July 1918.

The population of Russians and Karelian villages willingly supported the British, who then saw protection from those waves of anarchy and violence that rolled from the fire-engulfed civil war in Finland and Russia. Many fighters from the "northern expedition" together with I. Akhavo joined the regiment. In the second half of August 1918, the Karelian regiment had 1200 people, and at the end of the year - already 3600. Lieutenant Colonel Woods, an Irishman and an ardent champion of the national independence of small peoples, was appointed commander of the regiment. The Irishman Woods also invented the national flag of Karelia: a clover leaf on an orange field (such an emblem was sewn onto the uniforms of the regiment's soldiers). In September 1918, the Karelian Regiment, together with the Finnish Legion, defeated and forced out the remnants of the Finnish "white" volunteers abroad. In the hands of the "white" Finns, only the border village of Rebola remained with a number of villages of the volost of the same name, the population of which had voted in favor of joining Finland at the beginning of the year. Thus, the Finnish "intervention against the young republic of Soviets", which began in March 1918, was finally liquidated by **the combined forces of the "red-white" Finns and Karelian peasant militias armed by the Entente imperialists** [45, 67]. The year 1919 in Karelia passed under the sign of more and more intensifying disagreements (later

turned into armed confrontation) between various anti-Bolshevik forces. The White Guard government of General Miller (the so-called Northern Provisional Government), created in the fall of 1918 with the support of the allies in Arkhangelsk, categorically defended the thesis of "one and indivisible Russia". On this basis, relations between Miller and the Karelian autonomists aggravated every day. Officials of the "northern government" were simply expelled from the Karelian villages, attempts to organize a voluntary draft into the army of Miller gave a minimal result (in October 1918, only 359



Human). Forced mobilization in the spring of 1919 ran into armed resistance from the Karelian regiment. Then the White Guard "northern government" decided to put pressure on Karelia with the "bony hand of hunger." And not without success. Very little of their own bread was grown in the White Sea Karelia - the region lived from century to century due to trade exchange with the central regions of Russia.

And since all the most important food supply centers (the ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, the Murmansk-Kandalaksha-Kem railway line) were controlled by the British and the Arkhangelsk "government", it was not difficult to organize a "holodomor" in the Karelian villages. The situation around the Finnish Legion also escalated sharply, which in the eyes of the Russian White Guards was too "red". On February 16–18, 1919, another congress

was held in Kem, but this time it was much more representative (delegates from 12 volosts were present) congress. Formally, the convocation and holding of the congress was led by I. Akhavo, but behind the scenes (in fact, in a nearby pantry), the situation at the congress was controlled by the former leader of the "socialist workers' Finland", the "red-white" legionnaire O. Tokai, sentenced to death by the Finnish Communist Party [45]. The congress approved the resolution drawn up by O. Tokay and read out by I. Akhavo proclaiming Karelia an independent state.

The question of a possible future accession on the basis of a federation to Finland or Russia was left for further consideration by the Karelian people. The Karelian National Committee of 5 people was elected, whose chairman was Y. Lesonen. The committee was authorized to start negotiations with Russia and Finland, and to send two representatives to the Paris Peace Conference. which at that time "judged and dressed" Europe. The British and the Whites took a position of tough confrontation (by which

they simply helped the Bolsheviks, who in the spring of 1919 had neither the strength nor the time to fight "bourgeois nationalism" in Karelia). The commander of the garrison in Kemi, General Price, arrived at the congress and announced that the Allied leadership did not support any actions to separate Karelia from Russia. General Maynard ordered the commander of the Karelian Regiment, Woods, to cease all political activity in the regiment. At the end of March 1919, the Karelian regiment made an attempt to negotiate with the personnel of the Finnish Legion on a joint uprising against the allies. The plans of the rebels were exposed, and large-scale arrests began in early April. I. Akhavo was arrested and killed by soldiers of the Serbian battalion of allied forces. In the Karelian regiment left without leaders, general desertion began. On May 20, 1919, the regiment was finally disbanded. After that, the allies put pressure on the government of Finland, demanding that it quickly resolve the issue of repatriating the personnel of the Finnish Legion. In September 1919, an agreement was signed, according to which most of the "red-white" Finns were amnestied and received the right to return home. Those who were threatened with criminal prosecution in Finland remained under the protection of the British. Subsequently, they (including O. Tokay) received permission to move to Canada [45]. Left without armed support "Karelian National Committee"

continued to cry out in vain for help.

The Allied command confirmed the transfer of all food warehouses in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk to the White Guard "northern government" Miller and rejected the request to open the border with Finland for the delivery of food to Karelia. The Miller government, for its part, announced that the Karelian villages were collectively responsible for the successful course of the mobilization into the White army. As for the government of Finland, it **actually took the position of an outside observer**. Denying the "Karelian Committee" any political or military assistance, it agreed only to provide it with a loan of 2 million marks for the purchase of food. Moreover, in November 1919, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Holsti, declared to the representatives of the White Guard government in Helsinki a "strong protest" against the forced mobilization of the Karelians and the mass executions connected with this. In the same months of the autumn of 1919, the government of Finland, in complete unanimity with the British, categorically rejected Mannerheim's insistent appeals to send a regular Finnish army (and at that moment it numbered more than 35 thousand people) to help Yudenich, who was unsuccessfully storming Petrograd.

It is not difficult to understand the logic of the Russian White Guards: in the fall of 1919, victory in the Civil War seemed possible and close to them, and they arrogantly refused to support the separatist movements, for which support they would have to pay in the future with the territory "one and indivisible". One can also understand the position of the Finnish leadership - the people, who had just survived the nightmare of a fratricidal war, wanted calm and peace. The

country was to adopt a new, republican constitution, and in the first presidential election on July 25, 1919, the moderate centrist Stolberg defeated the "white general" Mannerheim with a huge majority of electoral votes (143 to 50). Svinhufvud and other leaders of the "White Finns" of the Civil War era were removed from leadership. An amnesty was declared for those "Red Finns" who were able to survive the terror of the first months after the suppression of the revolution. The Social Democratic Party of Finland also began to regain its lost positions, winning 80 out of 200 seats in parliamentary elections [68]. In such an environment, the Finnish authorities simply did not want to burden themselves with the problems of Karelia and Russia. But what guided the actions of the leaders of the Entente, who saved Lenin, Trotsky and Co. from inevitable defeat in the autumn of 1919, remained an unsolvable mystery of history ...

At the end of the winter of 1920, having defeated the main forces of the armies of Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich, the Red Army was finally able to turn the "punishing sword of the revolution" to the north. Lenin's ingenious plan - to let the opponents of the Bolshevik government wear down and bleed each other in internecine conflicts on the far outskirts of the empire - was fully justified. Parts of the Red Army were rapidly advancing towards Arkhangelsk. On February 19, 1920, General Miller fled to Murmansk. On February 21, the Bolshevik uprising began in Murmansk itself. Within a few days, the "northern government" and its army simply disappeared. The White Guards who survived the defeat surrendered, tried (mostly unsuccessfully) to break into Finland or fled to Rebola and Porayarvi (Porosozero) occupied by the Finns.

The civil war in southern, Ladoga Karelia ended with the same result, although the course of events there was significantly different from how the struggle developed in the northern, White Sea Karelia. The first difference was a completely different composition of the characters: in Olonets and Petrozavodsk there were no British and Serbs, but there was the Soviet government and the Red Guard, though not everywhere, not always and not immediately.

The news of the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd was met with great wariness in the capital of the Olonets province, the city of Petrozavodsk. The Petrozavodsk Soviet met on November 8, 1917 for a joint meeting with the Council of Employees of the Murmansk Railway. Committee of military units of the Petrozavodsk garrison and other revolutionary bodies. A resolution was adopted in which the Council of People's Commissars (Lenin's government) was promised support only on the condition that the Council of People's Commissars guaranteed the timely convocation of the Constituent Assembly. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly caused a heated discussion in the

Petrozavodsk Soviet, which ended late in the evening on January 18, 1918, with the violent expulsion of the opponents of the Bolsheviks from the meeting room.

The first decision of the new Presidium was to ban all demonstrations in Petrozavodsk. Then the Red Guard and Revolutionary Tribunal, subordinate only to the Bolsheviks, were created. *"The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is power won and maintained by the violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, power not bound by any laws. This is a simple truth, a truth as clear as daylight for any conscious worker (representative of the masses, and not the upper layer of the petty-bourgeois bastards bribed by the capitalists ... "* (V.I. Lenin). The Bolsheviks demonstrated this simple truth once again in June-July 1918. The Left Social Revolutionaries then received a majority not only in rural areas (there the Bolsheviks had not had any support before), but also in the executive committee of the Olonets provincial Soviet. created by them "military revolutionary committee". However, the power of the Revolutionary Committee actually did not extend beyond the boundaries of two cities: Petrozavodsk and Olonets. In order to control the villages and villages scattered across the forest impassability, the Bolsheviks simply did not have enough military strength at that time.

The fragile balance that has developed in Ladoga Karelia. was violated in the spring of 1919 by outside interference. In early April, a group of Finnish volunteers turned to Mannerheim (who was then acting regent, i.e., temporary head of state) with a proposal to organize a military expedition to liberate Olonets Karelia from the Bolsheviks. On April 4, 1919, Mannerheim replied that he approved the idea of a campaign against Olonets, since *"Finland cannot look indifferently at the suffering of kindred peoples who have found themselves under the yoke of the Bolsheviks."* This phrase is readily quoted by modern Russian historians, for some reason forgetting to bring it to completion. Namely: Mannerheim told the volunteers that they can count on the support of the Finnish authorities only if **the government receives the approval of this plan from the Entente.** The consent of the allies was never received, and the campaign of the "Olonets Liberation Army" was prepared in a semi-legal manner. The "army" gathered about 1 thousand volunteers, mostly members of the civil

wars in Finland [27, 45]. One of the four "battalions" (according to the actual number - a rifle company) was commanded by Major P. Talvela, in the future - a famous Finnish commander. On the night of

April 20-21, 1919, Finnish volunteers crossed the border and began advancing in three groups along the shore of Lake Ladoga and towards Petrozavodsk. Three days later, on April 24, the "liberation army" occupied Olonets and Pryazha, i.e. passed at least 70-80 km southeast of the border (we are talking about the border of 1919, the modern Russian-Finnish border runs much to the west). Such a pace of advance, better than any eyewitness accounts, indicates that the Finnish volunteers in the Karelian villages, at least, did not meet resistance. By the time they reached the approaches to Petrozavodsk, the "Olonets Army" had grown to 3,000 people at the expense of local militias. Now this "army" in size already corresponded to a rifle regiment. The Petrozavodsk Bolsheviks had not yet had time to be properly frightened, when the English General Maynard and the Russian White Guard Miller demanded an explanation from Helsinki. The result of the pressure organized by the Entente and its proteges was telegrams from the Finnish government sent in early May (that is, just two weeks after the start of the Olonets campaign) to London and Paris (participants of the Paris Peace Conference). The Finnish government assured that the "Olonets Campaign" was undertaken solely for the purpose of fighting the Bolsheviks and that no one dares to change the borders of Karelia without the approval of the great powers [45].

Meanwhile, a "provisional Olonets government" was organized in Olonets. The "government" included only local Karelian activists, although in the current military-political situation, the influence of the Finns was, of course, decisive. In the liberated from power of the Bolsheviks (or occupied by the "Olonets Army" - the reader has the right to choose any definition) the eight volosts of Ladoga Karelia held meetings of residents and elected authorized delegates to the congress, which took place on June 5-7, 1919. It was decided to join Finland according to model of the Rebolosky district (with the preservation of economic independence and the exemption of residents from conscription into the Finnish army for 30 years from the moment of unification). The powerful offensive of the Red Army (along with the local Red Guard detachments, a regular rifle division, units of the "Red Finns" who fled from Finland in the spring of 1918, and the ships of the Onega Flotilla, from which an assault was landed behind enemy lines) threw back the "Olonets liberation army" from Petrozavodsk. At the beginning of August, the volunteers were forced to retreat behind the Finnish border. The "Olonets campaign" ended in defeat, except for the transfer of the village of Porayarvi (Porosozero) and the volost of the same name to the Finnish administration, whose inhabitants voted in July to join Finland (after which the Finnish troops occupied Porayarvi in September 1919) [45].

At the beginning of 1920, the anti-Bolshevik forces in Karelia were finally defeated, even earlier Murmansk and Arkhangelsk left the armed forces of the Entente. The advance of the Red Army to the former administrative border of the Grand Duchy of Finland led in the last days of February 1920 to the first clashes with units of the regular Finnish army. In the area of Porayarvi (Porosozero)

local battles began, lasting two weeks and ending with the withdrawal of the Finns from two small villages (Jankjarvi and Sougärvi). It became obvious that in order to prevent further escalation of the conflict, Soviet Russia and Finland must finally decide on two main issues: the state border and Karelian autonomy. The first exchange of notes between Minister Holsti and People's Commissar Chicherin showed the

existence of significant differences in the fundamental approaches of the parties. The Finns appealed to the "Leninist principle" of the right of nations to self-determination, which principle should also be extended to the Karelians. The Bolsheviks honestly answered that the main "principle" for them was the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat on a global scale and they would not give the Karelian workers to bourgeois Finland. It should not be forgotten that in the spring of 1920 a dangerous disease spread in the Kremlin offices, later called by Comrade Stalin "dizziness from success." Trotsky and Tukhachevsky were preparing the Red Army for a campaign against Warsaw and Berlin, and in such an environment no one was going to stand on ceremony with some kind of Finland. The heavy defeat of the Red Army near Warsaw and the subsequent disorderly retreat under the blows of the Polish army to the east from the "Curzon Line" sobered

too hot heads. On July 28, in the Estonian city of Tartu (Yuriev), negotiations between the Finnish and Soviet delegations on the issue of concluding a peace treaty resumed. Clearly understanding that at a time when dozens of new independent states were emerging across Europe on the ruins of collapsed empires (German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Turkish), it will not be possible to avoid discussing the right of the Karelian people to autonomy in negotiations with the Finnish delegation, the Bolshevik leadership made a clever - in his opinion - move.

On June 8, 1920, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee adopted the following Resolution: *"In order to fight for the social liberation of the working people of Karelia ... to form in the areas of Olonets and Arkhangelsk provinces populated by Karelians in accordance with Art. II of the Constitution of the RSFSR regional association - the Karelian Labor Commune. To instruct the Karelian Committee to immediately start preparing the convocation of the Congress of Soviets of the Karelian Labor Commune, which will determine the organization of the authorities in the Karelian Labor Commune"* [37].

The only thing left to do was to find workers in Karelia suitable for the "working commune". This task was simple only at first glance. Industry in pre-revolutionary Karelia was poorly developed, the Aleksandrovsky Ammunition Plant in Petrozavodsk was perhaps the only large enterprise in the region, so that factory workers were in an absolute minority. The "poorest peasantry" (that is, the drunken village lumpen) so valued by the Bolsheviks in Karelia were liquidated as a class hundreds of years before the birth of Lenin (if they ever existed there at all). The reason for this phenomenon is extremely simple: in the harsh natural conditions of the White Sea, only a person with a sober head and calloused hands could survive. However, it was impossible to survive there alone even with calluses, which is why, until the beginning of the 20th century, both Karelians and Russian Pomors lived as a three-four-generation family, 30-40 people each in one large household.

Such a social structure (by the way, in full accordance with the teachings of Marx and Lenin) categorically prevented property stratification and

the emergence of impoverished proletarians. On top of their complete counter-revolutionism, a significant part of the Russians and Karelians of the White Sea region were Old Believers, and in such families they did not drink alcohol even on major holidays. There was no serfdom in the Olonets and Arkhangelsk provinces, which had an impact in a very definite way on the character of its inhabitants. *"The most characteristic feature of the Finnish tribes inhabiting Karelia can be considered industriousness, honesty, but, on the other hand, they also have another quality: this is stubbornness and isolation. Almost all residents are excellent hunters and well-aimed shooters"* (this is a record from the report of an employee of the General Staff of the Red Army K. Sokolov-Strakhov on studying the experience of the civil war). Well, how was it possible to make a "proletarian revolution" with such a people? They don't drink, they don't steal, they work, but at the same time they are stubborn and shoot well! Fists, pure fists! And the kulaks, as Comrade Lenin taught, are *"the most bestial, crudest, most savage exploiters... The kulak madly hates*

*the Soviet regime and is ready to strangle and cut hundreds of thousands of workers..."*. Could such wild beasts be trusted with *the "organization of the organs of power in the Karelian Labor Commune"*? So no one trusted them. On August 4, 1920, signed by Kalinin and Lenin, a joint Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars was issued, according to which *"The temporary (of course, "temporary", for a short period until the complete victory of the world revolution) was declared the supreme authority on the territory of the Karelian Labor Commune" "Revolutionary Committee of the Karelian Labor Commune" [37].* In fact, the power in this strange semi-state new

formation was transferred to the hands of the former "Red Finns" led by E. Gylling, who arrived in Karelia in the train of the advancing Red Army. Of course, the representatives of Finland at the negotiations in Tartu refused to recognize the "Karelian Labor Commune" (KTK) presented to them as the political structure of the real autonomy of the Karelian people. But they did it in a very vague way. As a result, in the text of the peace treaty signed on October 14, 1920, Article 10 appeared, which mentioned a certain "East Karelian Autonomous Region" (what is it?), allegedly formed by the Karelian population of the Arkhangelsk and Olonets provinces and "having the right of national self-determination". Thus, this non-existent "autonomous region" seemed to be recognized as ALREADY created. On the other hand, a special Statement of the Soviet delegation "On self-government of Eastern Karelia" was attached to the agreement, in which the Karelian population of the Arkhangelsk and Olonets provinces recognized the right "to form in their internal affairs a region that is part of the *Russian state on the basis of a federation*" [67]. This phrase could be interpreted as follows. that the structure of Karelian self-government did NOT exist YET at the time of the signing of the agreement and it would have to be created in the future. In any case, the CPC and its glorious Revkom were not m

It is difficult to say with certainty whether such vagueness of wording was the result of deliberate intrigue or elementary legal illiteracy. Noteworthy is the extremely strange composition of the Soviet delegation that signed the peace treaty in Tartu. If the treaty by "socialist workers' Finland" or the Decree on the creation of the CPC were signed by the first persons of the state (Lenin, Trotsky, Kalinin, Stalin), then second-rate officials were sent to Tartu: the head of ROSTA (Russian telegraph agency)

Kerzhentsev, a former general of the tsarist army Samoilo, a former captain of the 1st rank Berens (military experts) and an employee of the NKID Tikhmenev. The only prominent figure was the head of the delegation, Yan Berzin, the future head of Soviet military

intelligence. Be that as it may, the "time bomb" planted in the ambiguous wording of the peace treaty worked less than a year after it was signed. In August 1921, the government of Finland, appealing to the obligations of Soviet Russia under the Tartu Treaty, demanded the creation of Karelian autonomy. The Soviet government, with an expression of offended innocence, replied that such a thing had long been created in the form of the CPC. When Finland proposed to consider the controversial issue of interpreting the terms of the peace treaty in the League of Nations. Moscow responded in the same spirit in which 18 years later, in the first days of the "winter war", the Pravda newspaper would express itself, namely: "We will not let the imperialist pigs stick their dirty snout into our Soviet garden."

While there was a verbal squabble in the diplomatic offices, the Karelian and Russian peasants practically got acquainted with the power that the "Workers' and Peasants' Red Army" brought them on their bayonets. The result was completely standard, there was nothing specifically local, Karelian-Finnish in it. Not only in Karelia, but also in the Volga region, in the Tambov region, in the Urals, in Western Siberia, the peasants raised mass uprisings against the robbery and arbitrariness of the "commissar power". The only difference was that it was too far from Tambov to London and Paris, and today not a single sane Russian historian would dare to shift the blame for organizing the "Antonovshchina" onto the imperialists of the Entente. Karelia directly bordered on Finland, the participation of Finnish volunteers in the anti-Bolshevik struggle is an indisputable fact, and this fact allows unscrupulous authors to write such gems even at the turn of the 21st century: *"The Karelian adventure: the White Finnish intervention of 1921–1922. with the aim of tearing away from the RSFSR the territory of Eastern Karelia from the White Sea to the Baltic and the creation of Great Finland"* [67].

There is only one word of truth in this whole phrase: "adventure". Without serious support from the democratic countries of Western Europe - and there was no such support, the peasant uprising in Karelia (as well as all others) was an adventure doomed to defeat. Go with an act of "courage of desperation" - the reader is again free to choose any definition.

The uprising began in October 1921 and soon covered the vast territory of North Karelia from Porosozero to Kestenga. However, there is no need to talk about any "solid front" in the snowy taiga wilderness. There were separate centers, separate villages and villages occupied by the rebels, between which lay tens and hundreds of miles of forest impassability. The center of the uprising was first the village of Tunguda, then Ukhta. Peasants ("kulak bandits" in terms of Soviet and some Russian historians) created another "Provisional Karelian Committee" and another (this time the last) "Karelian Liberation Army" of about 3 thousand people. Finland's participation in these events was reduced to the moral **support of the rebels and the implicit consent of the authorities to the collection of volunteers**. In the end, under the command of the same P. Talvel, 500 people gathered, Karelians and Finns, who in November 1921 crossed over in two groups



the almost unguarded Soviet-Finnish border in the region of Porosozero and Rebola (under the terms of the Tartu Peace Treaty, these two counties were returned to Russia, an amnesty was declared to the inhabitants who supported joining Finland, but regular Red Army units were not introduced into Porosozero and Rebola) and united with the rebels.

The command of the Red Army took the uprising quite seriously. Martial law was introduced on the territory of the Karelian Labor Commune and the Murmansk region. The Operational Group of Troops of Karelia was formed, numbering 8.5 thousand bayonets, according to Soviet historians, or 13 thousand, according to Finnish historians [27]. Active participation in the suppression of the uprising was taken by the military formations of the "Red Finns": the ski battalion under the command of T. Antikainen and the battalion of the Petrograd International Military School under the command of A. Inno. A significant superiority in numbers and an overwhelming superiority in weapons (the Operational Group of Forces of Karelia received 166 machine guns and 22 guns) make it possible to quickly suppress the rebellion. In early January 1922, units of the Red Army occupied Porosozero and Reboly, on January 25 they entered Kestenga, and in early February 1922 they occupied Ukhta, the main center of the uprising. More than 8 thousand people - the surviving participants in the uprising, their families and neighbors - went to the territory of Finland. P. Talvela also survived, ahead of whom there was another campaign in Karelia ... On February 11, 1922, the

chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council L. Trotsky signed order *No. other bourgeoisie. In the most difficult conditions of the north, in the desert cold spaces, the soldiers of the revolution again fulfilled their duty to the end. The crime of the ruling classes of Finland and its patrons gave the working masses of Russia new hardships and sacrifices and introduced new feats of heroism into the history of the Red Army* [37].

Let's pay tribute to comrade Trotsky - he (unlike the later Soviet historians) did not begin to talk about how 500 Talvel volunteers set out to create "Great Finland from sea to sea." The Finnish "officers" did participate in the Karelian uprising: among the volunteers there were 27 former huntsmen (fighters of the elite part of Mannerheim's white army who had military training in Germany), and they most likely became unit commanders in the peasant "liberation army" [27]. The conditions for the conduct of hostilities were indeed "the most difficult", the enemy was armed and stubborn, many Red Army soldiers undoubtedly performed "feats of heroism." What to do - in the fire of the civil war, each side had its own truth ...

In the battles during the suppression of the Karelian uprising, the troops of the "Operational Group" lost 352

people killed. Comparison of this sad figure with the figures of irretrievable losses of the Red Army in other operations of 1921-1922. allows us to assess the real place of the "Karelian adventure" in the history of the first years of Soviet power:

- the suppression of the rebellion in Kronstadt - 1912
- people; - suppression of the West Siberian rebellion - 3744
- people; - suppression of the Sapozhnikov rebellion in the Urals and the Lower Volga - 4164 people; - suppression of the Antonov rebellion in the Tambov region - 6096 people;

- occupation of Armenia and Georgia - 9388 people; - fighting in Belarus against the White Guard Bulak detachments Bulakhovich and others - 14602 people [9].

Apparently, **there is no reason to call the battles in Karelia a "war", and even a "Soviet-Finnish war", no.** The "Karelian adventure" was just one of - and not the most noticeable and significant - episodes of the Civil War in Russia. Not a single unit of the Finnish regular army took part in the hostilities. The position of the official authorities of Helsinki in relation to the volunteers who, at their own peril and risk, enrolled in the Talvel detachment, was by no means the most benevolent (the border guard prevented both the passage of volunteers to Karelia and the penetration of Karelian refugees into Finland; it came to numerous armed clashes and murder Minister of the Interior of Finland by one of the Karelian rebels). And the number of "Red Finns" who took part in the suppression of the uprising was no less than the number of "White Finns" in Talvel's detachment ...

It would seem that after the signing of a peace treaty with Finland and the actual stabilization of the military-political situation in northern Russia, the "Karelian Labor Commune" could be dissolved: "the Moor has done his job, the Moor can leave." But that did not happen! The KTK existed for two years, after which, in accordance with the joint Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of July 25, 1923, it was transformed into the *"Autonomous Karelian Soviet Socialist Republic, as a federal part of the RSFSR."* The same E. Gylling became the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the AKSSR. The policy of consistent "finnization" of the autonomous republic continued and even intensified. The Finnish language was given the status of the state language, teaching in Karelian schools was transferred to it, newspapers and books were published in Finnish. And this, we note, at the same time, that the Finns constituted an insignificantly small proportion of the population of the republic (there are figures from 5 to 0.9%). As before in CPC. all key positions in the leadership of the AKSSR were occupied by the "Red Finns". I. Yarvisalo was appointed the first secretary of the Karelian Regional Committee of the RCP(b), and after his death in May 1929, G. Rovio.

In October 1925, the first call was made to the "Separate Karelian Jaeger Battalion". Its first commander was the "Red Finn" (by nationality - Swede) E. Mattson. In 1927, he was replaced by Urho Antikainen (younger brother of one of the main leaders of the Finnish Red Guard, Toivo Antikainen). In 1931, the "Separate Karelian Jaeger Brigade" was deployed on the basis of the Karelian battalion. The same E. Mattson was appointed commander of the brigade. The name "jaeger" was completely unique for the Red Army. It was proposed by the leadership of the AKSSR, by analogy with the Jaeger units that made up the elite of the Finnish army. The command staff of the "Karelian Jaeger Brigade" was purposefully selected from military personnel of Finnish nationality.

What was it? There is no exact answer to this question. One of the hypotheses can be built by carefully reading the topic. what Comrade E. Gylling wrote in 1928 in one of his articles. Describing the course of negotiations with Lenin's government in Moscow (the same ones that ended with the signing on March 1, 1918 of the "Treaty on Strengthening Friendship and Brotherhood"), he recalled that: "According to the *revolutionary*

*The principles of national policy were used new solutions that took into account the fact that to the east of the Finnish border lives a population related to the Finns, separated from Finland in tsarist times for various far-fetched reasons. It would be natural if, **after the conquest of power by the proletariat both in Finland and in the Karelian Republic, the boundary line between the two fraternal peoples would disappear** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) ... The attempts of the nationalists who came to power in Finland and capitalists hide behind the name of the Finnish People's Party ... By strangling the revolution in their country, they have rendered a disservice to the peoples kindred in Finland. those. prevented them from moving forward, as it was originally intended ... " [45].*

It can be assumed (it is hardly possible to prove or disprove this version with documents) that in the 1920s in Moscow they still hoped that "the conquest of power by the proletariat in Finland" could happen in the very near future, and counting on such a development situations kept ready a "reserve Finland", to which it would be possible to attach the really existing Finland after the victory of the Bolshevik-style revolution in it. This is a hypothesis. An indisputable fact is only the complete extermination in the second half of the 30s of the entire leadership of the "Red Finns", who took refuge in Soviet Russia in 1918.

The first arrests began in the spring of 1930. Then the OGPU arrested a group of commanders of a separate Karelian Jaeger battalion. The second wave of arrests among the commanders of the Karelian Jaeger Brigade began in the autumn of 1932 and ended with the execution of two dozen arrested commanders. In 1933, the OGPU "revealed" another "conspiracy of the Finnish General Staff", which led to new repressions and the final disbandment of the Karelian Jaeger Brigade in 1935. But these were only the first blows of the funeral bell. In March

1935, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decided to disband all Finnish territorial units, as well as departments in military educational institutions, where national cadres of Finnish officers were trained. Of the 257 officers and cadets, only 30 were not arrested. 90% of those arrested were shot or died in the camps (38, p. 17). From August 1935, a full-scale campaign against "Finnish bourgeois nationalism" was launched in the Soviet Union. In October 1935, at the 5th Plenum of the Karelian Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, it was reported that since 1933 the valiant Chekists "seized 1350 all kinds of spies." In the autumn of the same 1935, G. Rovno was removed from the post of the First Secretary of the Regional Committee. By the end of 1935, 835 people had been expelled from the party in Karelia. 219 of them are arrested. (71, pp. 156–158). In total, as a result of the "special operation" carried out by the NKVD, 4,688 people were arrested in Karelia alone. Finnish nationality, which amounted to about 40% of all Finns living in Karelia (38, pp. 16–17). On October 15, 1935 Petrozavodsk and other Karelian committees of the Communist Party of Finland were closed. At the same time, the CPF organizations in Leningrad are being liquidated, and the Finnish branch of the University of National Minorities in Leningrad is being disbanded. At the end of 1935, the organizer and leader of the CPF, the former leader of "Red Finland" K. Manner, was arrested. On May 28, 1936, the first commander of the Karelian Jaeger Brigade, Mattson, was arrested (he was incredibly lucky - he lived to see rehabilitation in 1957). The following year, 1937, the

E. Pauling and G. Rovno were shot. G.N. was appointed the first secretary of the Karelian regional committee. Kupriyanov, a Russian who worked for many years in the party apparatus of Leningrad (he was transferred to Petrozavodsk from the post of secretary of the district committee of the party). In Karelia, they were afraid to even mention the Finnish language, a public statement on the topic that Karelians and Finns are in some kind of relationship has become tantamount to suicide. The activities of the emigrant part of the CPF located in the USSR were almost completely curtailed. Of the 200 party activists, no more than ten survived [25]. The survivors wrote letters to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, in which they warmly thanked the NKVD for their revolutionary vigilance and bitterly repented of their own "carelessness" ... In accordance with bad memory,

order of the NKVD of the USSR No. , as is commonly believed, and the Great Terror of 1937-1938 began), a relatively small "order" was allocated to the Karelian Autonomous Republic: 300 people were to be seized according to the "1st category" (execution) and 700 according to the "2nd category" (arrest and camp). In fact, by April 15, 1938, 8,744 people had been arrested [71]. Almost all the leaders of party and Soviet bodies were "liquidated", including the main organizers of the "first wave" of repressions (1st secretary of the regional committee P. Irklis, 2nd secretary of the regional committee, member of the "troika" Nikolsky, People's Commissar of Justice of the KASSR Polin, People's Commissar of the NKVD of the Kassr Tenison). The general scale of repressions in Karelia can be judged by the fact that in 1954-1961. more than 10 thousand people were rehabilitated [71]. According to modern Finnish historians, at least 20,000 Finns living in the USSR died during the years of terror [25].

Newspapers published solemn reports about the successes of the NKVD. If we forget for a moment that the deaths of thousands of people are hidden behind all this feverish nonsense, then the following text reads like an example of black humor: *"The NKVD of the Karelian ASSR exposed and liquidated a counter-revolutionary insurgent organization. This organization arose in 1920 with the arrival in Karelia of a group of bourgeois nationalists (Gyulling, Myaki, Forsten), who headed the work of the Karelian Revolutionary Committee. By further expanding counter-revolutionary activities and including former members of the Finnish Social Democratic Party (Rovio, Matson, Vilmi, Usenius, Saksman, Jarvimyaki and others), the counter-revolutionary organization seized commanding heights in the party and Soviet apparatus of Karelia ... Having seized commanding heights at the very beginning in the republic, a nationalist organization carried out preparations for an armed uprising by creating a rifle jaeger brigade, staffed by national command staff and political workers who carried out counter-revolutionary indoctrination of personnel ... "[ 37].*

Thus tragically ended the first chapter of the history of the "socialist labor Finland". But Comrades Stalin and Molotov were already beginning to write a new chapter.

## Chapter

### 1.2 "MAJOR BORDER INCIDENTS IN MAINILA VILLAGE..."

In the early 1930s, the brilliant prediction of K. Marx clearly came true ("offer a capitalist 300% of the profit - and there is no such crime that he will not commit even under pain of the gallows"). In the context of a deep economic crisis (the Great Depression), the big bourgeoisie of the industrialized countries of the world (USA, England, France, Germany) raced to sell military equipment, technology, machine tools, laboratories, entire factories to Stalin. The reckless, immoral and suicidal policy of the West allowed Stalin to turn gigantic financial resources (both forcibly seized from the previous owners and newly created by the labor of a multimillion-strong army of collective farm and Gulag slaves) into mountains of weapons and military

technology.

Already in 1937, the Soviet Air Force was armed with 8139 combat aircraft - about the same number was in service with Germany (4093), England (1992) and the USA (2473) two years later [92].

By October 1, 1939, the aircraft fleet of the Soviet Air Force had grown one and a half times (up to 12,677 aircraft) and now already exceeded the total number of aviation of all participants in the outbreak of the world war [34]. According to the number of tanks (14544, not counting the obsolete T-27 and light amphibious T-37/38). The Red Army in the summer of 1939 was exactly twice as large as the armies of Germany (3419), France (3286) and England (547), taken together (34, pp. 83, 601). At the start of World War II, the Soviet Union was armed and very dangerous. And he began to act in the very first weeks of the war.

On September 17, 1939, the Soviet Union unilaterally tore up the Non-Aggression Treaty concluded on July 25, 1932 between the USSR and Poland, and huge forces (21 rifle and 13 cavalry divisions, 16 tank and 2 motorized brigades, a total of 618 thousand people and 4733 tanks) [34] struck in the back of the Polish army, which was fighting at that time against the German Wehrmacht. For a better understanding of Stalin's words and deeds, it is worth noting that the pretext for justifying this treacherous attack **changed three times in one week**. On September 10, 1939, Molotov, in a conversation with

the ambassador of fascist Germany in the USSR, Count Schulenburg, said that *"the Soviet government intended to declare that Poland was falling apart, and as a result, the Soviet Union should **come to the aid of Ukrainians and Belarusians who were threatened by Germany**" (underlined by me. - M.S.) (10, p. 87)*. This proposal caused an outburst of indignation in Berlin. On September 15, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop sent an urgent telegram to Schulenburg: *"Indicating a motive of this kind is an impossible act. It is in direct opposition to real German aspirations, which are limited exclusively to well-known zones of German influence. It also contradicts the agreements reached in Moscow* (meaning the Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939 and the secret additional protocol on the division

"spheres of influence" in Eastern Europe. - M.S.) *and, finally, will present both states (Germany and the USSR. - M.S.) to the whole world as enemies "* [10].

Molotov immediately reversed. On September 16, 1939, Schulenburg reported to Berlin: *"Molotov agreed that the pretext planned by the Soviet government contained a note offensive to the feelings of the Germans, but asked, taking into account the difficult situation for the Soviet government, not to allow such trifles to arise on our way"* (10, p. 94). After that, pretext No. 2 was made at lightning speed. It turns out that *"the workers and peasants of Belarus, Ukraine and Poland rose up to fight their age-old enemies - the landowners and*

*capitalists."*

Further, in the above-cited order No. 01 of the Military Council of the Belorussian Front dated September 15, 1939, the combat mission was set before the troops of the front: *"to assist the rebellious workers and peasants of Belarus and Poland* (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *in overthrowing the yoke of landowners and capitalists »* [34]. So, the new pretext number 2 was actually the oldest one, it returned the fighters and commanders to the glorious era of the Civil War and dreams of a world revolution. This beautiful scheme lived exactly one day. By the end of the day, "those who are supposed to" realized that the struggle of the Polish workers and peasants, and even supported by the invincible Red Army, should have ended in victory. But this victory was not planned. Something completely different was planned - from the end of September 1939 until June 22, 1941, Poland (even in top secret, not intended for the public documents) was called exclusively and only "former Poland" or even quite already in the Hitlerian manner "General governorship."

Then pretext No. 3 appeared, which we find in the order of the Military Council of the **Belorussian** Front No. 005 dated September 16, 1939 : *our Belarusian and Ukrainian brothers* (Polish "brothers", as we see, are no longer there. - M.S.) *into the meat grinder of the second imperialist war ... "* [34]. Even clearer was the text of V.M. Molotov to "citizens and citizens of our great country", broadcast on the radio on September 17 and published in the newspapers on September 18, 1939. Molotov's address no longer included either "working people" or "pan-bourgeois enslavers." There was only "blood" - foreign Polish and native Ukrainian-Belarusian: *"The events caused by the Polish-German war showed the internal inconsistency and obvious incapacity of the Polish state ... The Soviet government cannot be required to be indifferent to the fate of consanguineous Ukrainians and Belarusians living in Poland, and previously located in the position of nations without rights, and now completely abandoned to chance. The Soviet government considers it its sacred duty to extend a helping hand to its Ukrainian brothers and Belarusian brothers who inhabit Poland..."* This wonderful argument has outlived its authors and is in demand to this day. It was not affected by the fact that in 1945 a significant part of the so-called "Western Belarus" (the former Bialystok Voivodeship) had to be returned back to Poland, nor by the fact that the "Ukrainian brothers" 15 years ago left the Soviet empire

and thanked Russia is clearly not going for a "helping hand"...

Having done away with Poland in two weeks, Stalin, without wasting a single day for respite and rest, continued to exercise his "rights" recorded in the secret additional Protocol. On September 28, 1939, a "Treaty of Mutual Assistance" was signed in Moscow (it is noteworthy that the word "friendship" was not used!) Between the USSR and Estonia. On October 5, 1939, an agreement similar in name and content was signed with Latvia, and on October 10, 1939, with Lithuania. In all three cases, "mutual assistance" involved the deployment of Soviet military contingents on the territory of the Baltic states, approximately equal in number to the armies of these states. Thus, units of the 65th Rifle Corps (65th SC) with a total number of 21 thousand people were introduced into Estonia, parts of the 2nd SC with a total number of 22 thousand people were introduced into Latvia, and parts of the 16th SC with a total number of 19 thousand people. At the same time, the number of peacetime armies of these three states was 20, 25, and 28,000, respectively [34].

It should be especially noted that the units of the Red Army stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were only a small part of the group that was deployed on the borders of these states in late September and early October 1939. Then, in order to "reinforce" the diplomatic proposal about "mutual assistance" in the strip from the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland to the left bank of the Western Dvina (Daugava), three armies (8th, 7th, 3rd) and a separate rifle corps consisting of 20 rifle and 4 cavalry divisions were concentrated, 10 tank brigades with a total strength of 437 thousand people (34, p. 180). Moreover, as it has now become known, the task of these troops was by no means limited to a mere "flag demonstration". Documents

declassified in the 1990s unequivocally testify that the command of the Red Army prepared an operation to defeat the armed forces of the Baltic states and forcibly occupy their territory. Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR No. 043 / op dated September 26, 1939 demanded *"immediately begin to concentrate forces on the Estonian-Latvian border and complete it on September 29."* The troops were given the task of *"delivering a powerful and decisive blow to the Estonian troops ... to defeat the enemy troops and attack Yuryev and later on Tallinn and Pärnu ... advance in the general direction to Riga with a quick and decisive blow on both banks of the Dvina River ... September 28, 1939 The command of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet was ordered to put the fleet on full combat readiness by the morning of September 29th. The fleet was given the task of "capturing the Estonian fleet, preventing it from leaving for neutral waters, supporting the ground forces on the coast of the Gulf of Finland with artillery fire, and being ready for a landing..." [34].* The voluntary agreement of the Estonian and Latvian governments to conclude an agreement with the USSR made the planned military action superfluous, and the documents on its preparation were hidden in the bowels of the military archives for many decades.

Finland was the most "populous" among the four Baltic countries given to the Soviet "sphere of influence" (its population in 1939 was 3.65 million people, while in Lithuania - 2.9 million, Latvia - 2 million . and in Estonia 1.1 million). As for the territory of Finland, it was almost twice the area of the three Baltic countries combined. Yes and

Finland's location was "very inconvenient" for a potential aggressor: most of the vast, 1,300-kilometer Soviet-Finnish border passed through deserted, roadless wooded and swampy terrain, turning into the polar forest tundra in the north. It was no secret for the Soviet command and the presence on the Karelian Isthmus of a strip of long-term fortifications covering the shortest route from St. Petersburg to Helsingfors through Viipuri (Vyborg). Last but not least, Moscow knew that the Finnish leadership took a firm stand in defending the sovereignty of its country, treated the dubious proposals of the Soviet Union with great distrust, and therefore it would hardly be possible to resolve the issue with simple intimidation.

Clearly realizing that Finland would prove to be a tough nut to crack, the military-political leadership of the Soviet Union began planning a military operation long before Molotov, head of the USSR government and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, called the Finnish ambassador in Moscow on October 5, 1939 and informed him that the Soviet The Union wishes to discuss "certain political issues" with the Government of Finland. Clarify exactly what "political issues" will be discussed. Molotov refused, but demanded that the Finnish delegation come to Moscow as soon as possible. V. Tanner (participant in these negotiations, and from the beginning of the "winter war" - the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland) writes in his memoirs: *"On October 7, Molotov began to insist on an answer. The next day, Derevyansky, the Soviet ambassador in Helsinki, called Erkko (then Minister of Foreign Affairs - M.S.) to say that Moscow was literally 'boiling with indignation', since no answer had yet been received; that Finland's attitude to the invitation is very different from the reaction of the Baltic countries to it - this can negatively affect bilateral relations. Erkko replied that he did not know how the Baltic countries behaved, but the Finnish government behaves in accordance with the situation ... "* [23].

Unfortunately or fortunately, the Finnish government did not know the whole "situation" then. We also do not know everything, but some fragments of the picture of the preparation of the Soviet Union for war with Finland are already known at the moment. So, already on December 30, 1938, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Divisional Commander Smorodinov, sent a directive to the Military Council of the Leningrad District to conduct a "district operational game, with the involvement of the Military Council and the leadership of the headquarters of the Ural District." The conditions for the situation of this "game" were formulated as follows: *"East side. In order to most firmly secure Leningrad, the 1st and 2nd armies of the Northern Front, in cooperation with the KBF and the Ladoga flotilla, are developing an offensive operation with the main focus on Viipuri (Vyborg), San Michel (Mikkeli).* The developed material on the game was ordered to be submitted to the General Staff by April 1, 1939 [233]. Prepared for "the most durable security

of Leningrad" and the headquarters of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet. Already on March 17, 1939, at the headquarters of the KBF (at the direction of the Main Naval Headquarters), a task was developed to conduct a *"two-sided operational game."* The game was to be held on March 26–28, 1939 at the Main Base of the KBF in Kronstadt. It is noteworthy that in the task for the "game" quite specific dates for the start of the offensive were indicated:

*"...2. The coastal groups of the Red Army on the Karperesheyka and on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland at dawn on 07/27/39 go on the offensive against Viipuri (Vyborg) and*



*Rakvere* (a city in Estonia).

3. *The Red fleet to capture the islands by simultaneous landing eastern part of the Gulf of Finland...*

However, the most interesting thing in the task for this game is the description of the situation preceding the start of hostilities: *"A number of large border incidents with the Blues took place on Karperesheyka on 22-23.07.39 near the village of Mainila ... boat) drowned the TR (transport) of the Reds ... "* [234]. The clairvoyance of the compilers of the task cannot but shake the imagination. Eight months before the "brazen provocation of the White Finnish military" (which provocation

took place, as you know, on November 26, 1939), both **the geographical point (the village of Mainila) and, in fact, the exact date (four days before the start) were already known. liberation campaign).**

"Unknown submarine" also did not remain idle. On September 27, 1939, at the moment of the beginning of negotiations with the Estonian delegation in Moscow, the Soviet radio (and then the central newspapers) reported on the sinking of the Soviet cargo ship Metallist off the coast of Estonia. But Estonia (as mentioned above) succumbed to Stalin's dictatorship without a fight, the war on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland did not start, and Metallist was ordered to be forgotten ...

These amazing "games" became known only at the beginning of the 21st century. But even in the most "stagnant years", all types of censorship passed and the memoirs of Marshal K.A. were published. Meretskov, in which he tells how at the end of June 1939 he (at that time - the commander of the troops of the Leningrad Military District) was summoned to Moscow, to Stalin. *"In his office, I found a prominent worker of the Comintern, a well-known figure* (that's right, that's right, a

well-known" figure" - M.S.) *of the CPSU (b) and the world communist movement O. Kuusinen ... I was introduced in detail to the general political situation and told about the fears that our leadership had in connection with the anti-Soviet line of the Finnish government ... "* In this regard, Meretskov was ordered to develop a plan for *" a counterattack on the armed forces of Finland in the event of a military provocation on their part ... To speed up the training of troops in conditions close to combat. All preparations should be kept secret..."* [93]. It is noteworthy that the notorious "fears" arose in Moscow precisely when the Soviet Union created and armed a huge, the largest army in Europe. Earlier, at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, when a grandiose program of modernization and militarization of the economy was just beginning to be implemented in the USSR, only

four rifle divisions were concentrated on the border with Finland [35]. And this was quite understandable and justified: Finland was separated from all potential opponents of the Soviet Union by sea, and the transfer of significant military contingents by sea required time, resources, excluded the possibility of a sudden strike, and was very unsafe for a potential aggressor, given that approaches to the ports of Finland (the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Bothnia) were within the reach of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and Soviet aviation. After Germany agreed to the transfer of the Baltic states to the Soviet "sphere of influence", and the Anglo-French bloc, in connection with the outbreak of a great European war, had too many other worries, grounds for "fear"

should have been even smaller. Nevertheless, it was in the autumn of 1939 that the preparations for the invasion of Finland moved into the plane of practical affairs.

On September 16, 1939, in accordance with NKO order No. 0052, the Murmansk Army Group (hereinafter the 14th Army) was formed on the basis of the 33rd Rifle Corps, which received the task of deploying its forces on the border with Finland by October 1, 1939. 14 September 1939, in accordance with NPO directive No. 16664, two armies are created: the 8th on the basis of the Novgorod Army Group (created on August 13 on the basis of NPO order No. 0129) and the 7th on the basis of the troops of the Kalinin Military District. In the last days of September 1939, these two armies deployed on the borders of Estonia and Latvia, but by October 26, 1939, the headquarters of the 8th Army moved to Petrozavodsk [59]. In accordance with

NPO order No. 0145 of October 24, three rifle divisions of the 7th Army (49th, 75th and 123rd rifle divisions) advanced to the border with Finland on the Karelian Isthmus. The redeployment of Red Army formations began much earlier in Ladoga and North Karelia, where, due to the extremely weak development of the road network, this required much more time than in the Leningrad Region. So, already on September 17, the 18th Rifle Division began its march from Petrozavodsk to the border with Finland, the next day the 54th Mountain Rifle Division began advancing to the Rebola region [14]. At the end of October, three more divisions (the 139th Rifle Division, the 155th Rifle Division, and the 163rd Rifle Division) set in motion [95]. Later, in the period from November 6 to 23, the 75th Rifle Division was transported by ships of the Ladoga military flotilla from Shlisselburg to the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga, where it was included in the troops of the 8th Army.

Simultaneously with the beginning of the transfer of troops to the Finnish border, a plan was being worked out for what Meretskov delicately called in his memoirs *"a plan for a counterattack on the armed forces of Finland in the event of a military provocation on their part."* One of the now documented versions of the plan was the Report of the Commander of the LVO Troops No. 4587 dated October 29, 1939, signed by Meretskov himself [97]. The report was addressed to People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov and began with these words: *"I present the plan of operation to defeat the land and sea forces of the Finnish army ..."* Paragraph 5 of this fundamental document read: *"The plan of operation is planned as follows. Upon receipt of an offensive order, our troops simultaneously invade Finnish territory in all directions in order to separate the enemy force grouping and, in cooperation with aviation, inflict a decisive defeat on the Finnish army. The main forces of our troops strike from the Vidlitsa (Vidlitsa*

*is a village on the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga, 10 km north of the city of Olonets) and from the Karelian Isthmus smash the main grouping of the Finnish army in the area of Sortavala, Viipuri, Kyakisalmi (Kexholm). In the north (the Murmansk direction), with the permission to cross the*

*border, our troops take possession of Petsamo (Pechenga), after inflicting an air strike on the enemy troops stationed there. On the Kem (Kem - a city in the White Sea Karelia) direction, the task of our troops is to act in the direction of Oulu (Uleaborg), defeat the Finnish opposing units and prevent the possibility of enemy troops approaching from the north, with the ultimate goal of capturing Oulu "(a large city on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, access to Oulu meant that the territory of Finland would be completely "cut" in its narrowest section. - M.S.)*

It should be noted that reaching the line Vyborg-Imatra-Sortavala was understood by the developers of the "counterattack plan" only as the first operational task of the troops. In paragraph 6-6 we read: *"After completing this task, be ready for further actions inland according to the situation."* For the decisive and quick fulfillment of the task of defeating the Finnish army, it was planned to create an overwhelming superiority in forces and means: 2.5 to 1 - in the number of infantry battalions; 5.5 to 1 - in artillery (including 12 to 1 - in terms of the number of large-caliber guns); 12 to 1 in aviation and 74 to 1 in tanks. As you know, these calculations were later declared "overly optimistic" or even "adventurous", and the actual number of Soviet troops by the end of the "winter war" was three times higher than Meretskov's originally planned.

In the second half of November 1939, preparations for the invasion of Finland were practically completed. Apart from the formation of the 14th (Murmansk) army, only on the Karelian Isthmus, in the Ladoga and North Karelia, 17 rifle divisions, 6 tank and motorized brigades were concentrated. On November 17 (i.e., 10 days before the notorious "shelling in Mainil"), the People's Commissar of Defense issued order No. 0205 / op, in which the task was set to *"finish the concentration and be ready for a decisive offensive in order to defeat the enemy as soon as possible."*

Based on this directive, the Military Council of the LVO, by its order No. 4715 of November 21, set specific combat missions for the armies and fleets, while it was indicated that the date for the start of the operation would be specified additionally [34].

Further, the commanders of the armies and corps gave combat orders to their subordinates. For example, the commander of the 19th SC (7th Army, Karelian Isthmus) on November 23, 1939 (that is, exactly a week before the start of hostilities) issued Combat Order No. 2, which said:

*"P. 3. The 19th Rifle Corps, with a strike in the direction of the Kivenappa pickaxe (now the village of Pervomaiskoye on the Vyborg highway, about 30 km from the border in 1939), destroys the opposing units of the Finns, preventing them from retreating to the main fortified area ... p. 7. Day transition to the offensive will be specifically indicated" [95].*

Even in polar Murmansk, they were preparing to "throw Finnish troops away from Leningrad." And very far away. On November 28, the Military Council of the 14th Army ordered. *"When entering the Swedish and Norwegian borders, in no case should the border be violated ... the servicemen of the Swedish and Norwegian armies, when meeting at the border, should be greeted with a salute, without entering into negotiations ..." [99].* Orders similar in content (with the requirement "do not cross the border with Sweden") were also found in the headquarters documents of two divisions of the 9th Army, defeated in early January 1940 in the battle of Suomussalmi (central Finland) [22].

In the late autumn of 1939, the planning of the operations of the Baltic Fleet and the Ladoga Flotilla also moved from the stage of "bilateral staff games" to the development of combat orders. On November 23, 1939, the Military Council of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet issued Directive No. 5 / op: *"To interrupt the sea communications of Finland, preventing the delivery of troops and combat equipment from outside, to destroy the coastal defense battleships and enemy submarines in the sea and in the bay, preventing them from leaving*

*for territorial waters Sweden" [100].* In the report compiled after the end of the "winter war" by the commander of the Ladoga flotilla, captain of the 2nd rank Smirnov, it was noted that *"the first task, which, by order of the Military Council of the KBF, was developed by the headquarters of the flotilla in*

**October 1939** ( *underlined by me. - M.S.*). *there was a landing as part of a reinforced regiment in the Gulf of Sortanlaks " [37].* On November 23, the KBF Military Council, in its Directive No. 7 / op, set more ambitious tasks for the command of the Ladoga Flotilla: “- *destroy*

*Finnish ships in Lake Ladoga; - to prevent the landing of sabotage troops on Lake Ladoga ... - to support the flanks of the 7th and 8th armies with artillery fire; - be ready for the landing of sabotage groups on the front of Sortavala - Kyakisalmi (Kexholm); ...*  
*The beginning of hostilities on the signal "Torch" (use weapons, the war has begun)" [37].* Along with the main,

military component, the "counterattack plan" included political propaganda part. It was

necessary to organize that very “*military provocation by the armed forces of Finland*”, in response to which a counterattack would be launched with “*access to the Swedish and Norwegian borders*”. And, much more significantly, it was necessary to create those pseudo-independent state structures in advance, to which power in Helsinki would be formally transferred after the Soviet troops “*destroyed the opposing parts of the Finns, preventing their withdrawal.*” If there were no particular difficulties with the methods and techniques of organizing an armed provocation (the NKVD OGPU had accumulated vast experience by that time), then there were big problems with the “people's government” and the “revolutionary army”. Cadres, as Comrade Stalin taught, decide everything, but there were no cadres. Cadres, as we already know, were completely eliminated in the course of the many years of struggle against “Finnish bourgeois nationalism.” There were almost no survivors in Karelia and Leningrad, so the leaders for the future Soviet Finland had to be sought in safer places. One of these safe (compared to the Soviet Union of the 1937 model) places was Spain, engulfed in the fire of the civil war. There, as a military adviser to the international brigades, a “red Finn” fought, a graduate of the Military Academy. Frunze, Comrade A. Anttila. He was appointed commander of the 106th Infantry Division of the Leningrad Military District. This

division, despite the standard designation, was quite unusual - the personnel were recruited exclusively from persons who spoke Finnish or Karelian. The order to form it was signed by People's Commissar Voroshilov on November 11, 1939 (that is, **20 days before the "people's government of democratic Finland" was presented to the astonished world**). However, the Russian historian P. Aptekar, who has been working with the documents of the RGVA for many years, claims that the order of November 11 only formally completed the formation of the “Karelian-Finnish division”, which began in mid-October [95]. Be that as it may, the division was formed, the commander was appointed, and already on November 23, 1939, on the basis of the 106th division, the “1st Mountain Rifle Corps of the People's Army of Finland” began to form. It was supposed to deploy a corps consisting of four divisions, but, alas, there were not enough people. In January-February 1940, only 1441 applications were submitted for voluntary entry into the “people's army” [41]. This could be enough to complete two rifle battalions, but not four divisions.

Of course, the shortage of personnel of the divisions of the "people's army" did not have any slightest military significance.

All they had to do was parade in front of the presidential palace in Helsinki. For the parade and one and a half thousand people was quite enough. But the refusal of Comrade Tuominen to head the "people's government" almost put the entire propaganda part of the operation in jeopardy. Ervo Tuominen belonged to the generation of young Finnish communists (in 1918 he was only 24 years old). In the 20-30s. he worked (that is, he called on the Finnish workers not to work, but to overthrow the government) in Finland, where he became one of the well-known leaders (later - secretary of the PC) of the PCF and in this capacity was invited to work in the Comintern in Moscow. In Moscow, Tuominen was fabulously lucky - he was not shot. Moreover, at the beginning of 1938, he asked O. Kuusinen to send him to Stockholm to continue the revolutionary struggle, and this request was granted. As a result, in the fall of 1939, E. Tuominen could be considered an ideal candidate for the role of leader of "democratic Finland"; he was alive, he spent almost his entire life outside the USSR, and he was known in Finland (for good or bad, but they knew).

On November 13, 1939, Tuominen received a letter signed by Kuusinen and Dimitrov demanding that he return to Moscow immediately. In the next letter, it was indicated that he had to fulfill an important and responsible mission in the matter of establishing new relations between Finland and the USSR. E. Tuominen understood everything and on November 17 wrote a letter in which he refused such an "honor". On November 21, a courier arrived in Stockholm from Moscow, bringing an even more strict order for Tuominen to arrive in the USSR the next day by Moscow plane. Tuominen refused this time as well [23]. In the future, he openly broke with Stalin and Bolshevism. It is noteworthy that in an open letter addressed to the leader of the Comintern G. Dimitrov, Tuominen explained his decision as follows: *"You and some other secretaries of the Comintern already knew at least on November 13 that Finland would be attacked and it was decided to create a 'people's government'" [104].*

In parentheses, we note that not all Finnish communists who settled in comfortable and calm Stockholm followed the path indicated by Comrade Tuominen. Not at all. In the archives of the Comintern there are yellowed sheets of paper: "Top secret. On the work of the CPF in recent months. The document was drawn up on July 12, 1940, signed by Comrade I. Strand. We read: *"The work of the party apparatus in Sweden concentrated at the beginning of the war around the creation of sapper groups, which, when the Red Army approached, would cross the border and make it difficult for the enemy to retreat" [ 105].* The enemy, who was going to blow up when trying

to retreat Finnish  
communists are the Finnish army...

The disobedience (one might say, an attempt to escape) shown by the former comrade Tuominen caused an explosion of indignation in the Kremlin. And anger, as you know, is a bad adviser in business. Only excessive emotions can explain the incredible decision to appoint O. Kuusinen, the world-famous secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, who has been living in Moscow since 1918, and to all this also a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b). The appointment of Kuusinen turned the whole performance with the "rebels" in the holiday village of Terioki

"workers" and the proclamation of "democratic Finland" into a stupid and crude farce. Mannerheim describes in his memoirs the first days of the war as follows: *"an appeal was broadcast on the radio* (there were two whole "appeals": on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Finland and on behalf of the "people's government" Kuusinen. - M.S.), *addressed to the Finnish people, which exposed not only the face of the enemy, but also his goals ... leaflets, which, along with bombs, were scattered over the capital and promised "bread to the hungry people of Finland", could not cause anything but laughter. In fact, this propaganda only strengthened our internal front"* [22].

But what is interesting is that on the other side of the border there were people who seriously believed that Comrade Stalin was ready to give some territories to the "Kuusinen government". As a result, in Soviet Karelia, in areas that with one stroke of the pen passed into the non-existent "democratic Finland", a slight panic began. Not only Russians, but also indigenous Karelians, long and firmly savvy at lectures in the "red corner", did not want to end up "in a world of poverty, lack of rights and brutal capitalist exploitation." Things got to the point that in mid-December 1939, a republican party activist was assembled in Petrozavodsk, at which Comrade Kupriyanov, the first secretary of the Karelian Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (probably, who himself did not understand anything about this buffoonish clownery), explained to the audience the current moment as follows: *"The desire to escape from the regions that go to Finland cannot be regarded otherwise than as shameful desertion. This is a disregard for the interests of the Party and the Motherland"* [41].

Yes, a lot of things happened in the history of the CPSU and the USSR, there were times when the term "escape" was used in official documents for unauthorized departure from the Land of Soviets - as if it was a prison or a concentration camp, and not about the homeland of the working people of the whole world. But for the desire to stay in the USSR to be equated with desertion - this is already something beyond ...

Strictly speaking, this brief review of the events preceding the start of the "winter war" could be completed. But - some of our readers will be surprised (if not outraged) that the author passed over in silence such an important topic as the Soviet-Finnish negotiations held in Moscow in October-November 1939. Let's consider this issue as well. All Soviet (and many modern Russian) historians unanimously assure us that Stalin did not want a war with Finland, and only the stubborn and arrogant unwillingness of the Finnish leadership to satisfy the very modest demands of the Soviet Union (four tiny islands in the Gulf of Finland, a small "shift" of the border on the Karelian Isthmus) forced Stalin to start a war. In our opinion, this complex statement should be divided into two parts. Then it becomes extremely easy to evaluate each of them separately.

**Stalin really did not want war with Finland. Stalin wanted to include Finland in his empire under construction.** Everything that we know today about Stalin, about his policy, about his tactics, about his character, leads us to the assumption that Stalin did not want war, did not like war (and he never talked to the Red Army soldiers in the trenches) and everything that could be taken away without war - by deceit, cunning or threats - was taken peacefully. In this sense, our main character was not like either Peter I or Napoleon. With a probability

close to 100%, it can be assumed that Stalin would agree to carry out the annexation of Finland in the same peaceful forms in which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were annexed and incorporated into the USSR. As for

the stubborn unwillingness of the Finnish government to satisfy anyone, then this can be considered a legitimate reason for war only within the framework of the wild concepts of the "law of the jungle". Finland was not obliged to give up a single square centimeter of its territory. Moreover, it was not even obliged to participate in such "negotiations", the subject of which was a forced "exchange of territories" or some strange "lease", which was forced to agree to the threat of war, etc. All this is as indisputable as the fact that **the unwillingness of a rape victim to voluntarily satisfy the "minimum demands" of the rapist in any court of the world will not be regarded as a circumstance mitigating the guilt of the perpetrator.** The only thing that Finland (as well as the USSR!) was obliged to fulfill was the Peace Treaty signed in 1920 in Tartu, and the Non-Aggression Treaty concluded between Finland and the USSR in 1932. Agreements must be fulfilled. But it was precisely this component of Soviet-Finnish relations that Moscow avoided discussing. *"We constantly referred to the peace treaty concluded in Tartu, as well as to the Non-Aggression Pact. concluded in 1932 at the initiative of the USSR and confirmed in 1936. Those links were useless; they were literally ignored,"* V. Tanner writes in his memoirs [23]. There is hardly any subject for discussion in all these most obvious questions. And it was no coincidence that on

November 26, 1939, a mock shelling of the positions of the Red Army in Mainil was organized - even Stalin and Molotov understood that the mere unwillingness of the Finns to "swap territories" was not enough to give the war unleashed by them at least a slight semblance of legality. That is why, four days before the war, the "incident in Mainil" planned back in March 1939 took place, and on the second day of the war, the "Kuusinen government" appeared, at the request of which the Red Army went to smash the "White Finnish Mannerheim gangs". Does this mean that the Moscow talks were an empty formality or that they were organized only as a cover for the laborious and

inevitably lengthy redeployment of army formations to the forest wilderness of Karelia? A large share of common sense in the version about the "camouflage" task of negotiations (such a maximalist point of view was expressed by Professor Yu. Kilin) is certainly present [14]. The road network in Ladoga Karelia had a very low capacity, in a number of places there were no roads at all, and the troops advanced to the border on foot, relatively speaking "at the speed of a turtle." And yet, the task that Stalin and Molotov wanted to solve in negotiations with the Finnish delegation was not exhausted by just covering the concentration of troops. The Soviet side really sought to reach agreements on the terms that it put forward at the talks. To be convinced of this, it suffices to carefully re-read the memorandum of the Soviet government, which was presented on the evening of October 14 to the head of the Finnish delegation. Here is a summary of this document almost completely.

*"... Acting on the basis of the above proposals, it is necessary resolve the following issues by mutual agreement and to mutual benefit:*

*1. Leasing to the Soviet government for 30 years the port of Hanko and the adjacent territory within a radius of five to six nautical miles to the south and east, arming it with coastal artillery, capable of blocking access to the Gulf of Finland with its fire, together with the fire of the base in Paldiski on the southern coast . For the defense of the naval base, Finland will allow the Soviet Union to deploy the following personnel in the port*

*of Hanko ... 2. Granting the Soviet Navy the right to use the Lappohya Bay (next to peninsula of Hanko. - M.S.) as an anchorage.*

*3. The cession to the Soviet Union of the following areas with appropriate territorial compensation: - the islands of*

*Suursaari, Lavensari, Bolshoi Tyuters and Maly Tyuters (Gotland, Powerful, Maly, Seskar) and Koivisto (Birch); - parts of the Karelian*

*Isthmus from the village of Lipola (Kotovo) to the southern outskirts the city of Koivisto (Primorsk);*

*- the western part of the Rybachy Peninsula with a total area of 2761 square kilometers in accordance with the attached map.*

*4. In compensation for the areas mentioned in paragraph 3, the Soviet Union will cede to the Republic of Finland Soviet territory near Rebol and Porijärvi (Porosozero) with a total area of 5,529 square kilometers in accordance with the attached map. 5. Strengthening the*

*non-aggression pact currently in force between the Soviet Union and Finland, supplementing it with a condition under which the participating countries undertake to refrain from participating in such groupings or alliances of countries that may directly or indirectly pose a threat to another participating country. 6. Destruction by both sides of the fortified areas*

*along the Finnish-Soviet border on the Karelian Isthmus, leaving the usual border guards along the border line" [23].*

As you know, speaking on the all-Union radio on November 29, 1939, a few hours before the start of the war. Molotov declared: *"The sole purpose of our measures is to ensure the security of the Soviet Union and especially Leningrad."* If we look at the Soviet memorandum from this angle, we can find in it the only point that can really be considered a proposal aimed at strengthening the security of the USSR. This is the first subparagraph of paragraph 3 - the transfer to the Soviet Union of a chain of islands, which stretches along the main navigable channel in the Gulf of Finland. Without creating special additional problems for Finland, the Soviet Union thus strengthened the position of its fleet in the bay. **And the Finns agreed to this proposal!** Already on October 16, at the very first discussion of the Soviet memorandum in the State Council, it was decided to agree to the cession of the islands in the Gulf of Finland. Then this decision was confirmed by the government and the President of Finland and included in the instructions with which the Finnish delegation went to Moscow on October 21 for the second round of negotiations [23]. So what is traditional for Soviet historiography



statement about. that "the Finns arrogantly rejected ALL the proposals of the Soviet government" is a deliberate lie.

Associating the issue of the western part of the Rybachy Peninsula, located at a distance of 1,400 km from Leningrad, with ensuring the "security of the city of Lenin" can only be done as an inappropriate joke. At the negotiations in Tartu in 1920, it was decided to divide the peninsula and provide equal conditions for fishing to both countries - two bays on the western coast were given to Finland, two bays on the east - to the Soviet Union. Since no connection with the "defense of Leningrad" could even be invented in this case, the following wonderful argument appeared in the preamble of the Soviet memorandum of October 14 : *map*" [23]. Nevertheless, the question of the western part of the Rybachy Peninsula was raised not by chance, and by no means in order to improve the supply of Norwegian herring to Soviet workers.

The western part of Rybachy is the entrance to the bay of the port of Petsamo (Pechenga). This is the northern sea gate of Finland, and in war conditions it is the only point through which Finland will be able to communicate with the outside world (in other words, with the English fleet), because. sea communication through the Gulf of Finland was planned to be paralyzed by the actions of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, and land communication with the ports of Norway depended on the goodwill of the two governments: Norwegian and Swedish.

If the appearance of the Red Army and Navy on the western coast of the Rybachy Peninsula could physically block Finland's connection with potential allies, then paragraph 5 of the memorandum blocked this connection politically. The insidious (albeit easily guessed) wording ("in such groupings or alliances of countries that may directly or indirectly pose a threat to another country") allowed Moscow to charge Finland with violation of the terms of the treaty in the event of almost any attempt by Finland to seek international assistance and support. Paragraph 6 explicitly and directly called for a decrease

(instead of the declared increase) in the security of both contracting parties. Of course, for Finland, the destruction of the fortification zone was like death, while for the Soviet Union, with its huge army and aviation. the effect of reducing defense capabilities was smaller. Nevertheless, if Stalin really considered it possible for a large enemy army (German or Anglo-French) to appear on the territory of Finland, then he would by no means even discuss the issue of destroying the fortifications on the Soviet side of the border, and **even** in close proximity to Leningrad - the largest industrial, scientific and transport center of the country. The meaning and purpose of paragraph 6 of the Soviet memorandum does not raise the slightest doubt - this is in fact an open demand to open the gates to the Red Army advancing on Vyborg and further *"inland according to the situation."*

Similar consequences could have been the fulfillment of Soviet demands to move the border on the Karelian Isthmus to the city of Koivisto and transfer the island of the same name to the Soviet Union (now the city of Primorsk and Berezovy Island). From Koivisto to the center of Leningrad, more than 100 km. Artillery with such a range

shooting simply does not exist, so "to keep the city of Lenin under the threat of shelling" from Koivisto is impossible in principle. On the other hand, the transfer of these territories tore the Mannerheim Line in the most important, Vyborg operational direction and deprived the Finnish troops of fire support for two artillery forts (Saarenpää with six 10-inch guns and Hyumalijoki with six 6-inch guns). For the Red Army, in which field artillery guns numbered in the tens of thousands, and large-caliber guns in the thousands, the question of the fate of 12 guns hardly deserved attention. But for the niche of the Finnish army, the coastal batteries of the island of Koivisto accounted for a fourth of all large-caliber artillery! In addition, these guns were inside reinforced concrete casemates, i.e. were relatively securely sheltered from Soviet air strikes, the superiority of which (quantitative and qualitative) was overwhelming. The operational significance of these batteries increased even more, taking into account the fact that in the zone of their fire there were two main roads of the Karelian Isthmus - automobile and railway. And although the forts of the island of Koivisto, with their maximum firing range, respectively, 23 and 18 km, did not pose any threat to either Leningrad or Kronstadt (which was more than 70 km away), Stalin stubbornly insisted on the **transfer of this island until the very end of the negotiations** [23] .

The first item on Stalin's list of "minimum requirements" was the Khanko Peninsula. And this question really deserved the first place. If the "peaceful capture" of Koivisto and the destruction of long-term fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus led the Red Army only to the approaches to Vyborg - and from it to Helsinki another 240 km, then the Soviet military base on Hanko was nothing more than a "revolver assigned to the temple" of Finland. The port of Hanko does not freeze almost all winter, has 1500 m of equipped berths and, most importantly, a road and rail line connecting Hanko with the capital. From Hanko to the center of Helsinki 110 km by highway. Having such a ready springboard for the landing of troops as the port of Hanko, the Red Army could attack Helsinki from two sides at the same time: from the west of Hanko and from the east of Vyborg. Stalin's intentions were too obvious, so they had to be masked. It was done, as always, rudely and illiterately.

Both the preamble and paragraph 1 of the Soviet memorandum substantiated the claims to Hanko by the desire to *"block access to the Gulf of Finland with coastal artillery fire together with the fire of the Paldiski base on the southern (Estonian) coast of the bay."*

Indeed, on a large-scale geographical map, the blue stripe of the sea surface at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland seems very thin, and it seems possible to "block" it with the fire of huge cannons. The trouble is that the map is flat and the Earth is round. The curvature of the earth's (sea) surface results in line-of-sight distances of the order of 10 nautical miles (18–20 km). All. Beyond is the horizon, and beyond it nothing can be seen. Therefore, aimed shooting in a sea battle at distances of more than 10-12 miles is impossible in principle - no matter how huge guns a ship is equipped with. In practice, there is fog on the sea, night falls every day, therefore, without radars and complex fire control systems, aimed shooting at a distance of 10 miles remains only a dream. And with locators, long-range guns and experienced gunners, it is not always possible to "block" the passage of enemy ships. What the British were practically convinced of on February 12, 1942, when three German ships (battleships

"Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau" and the heavy cruiser "Prince Eugene") passed through the invisible beams of radar and under the muzzles of large-caliber coastal batteries across the English Channel. And this despite the fact that the British were waiting for this event and preparing for it for several years. The width of the English Channel at its narrowest point, in the Dover area, is only 34 km, and from Hanko to Paldiski - 76 km. And no radars. What could have

been "blocked by artillery fire" here? On the other hand, it is possible to block the entrance of the enemy fleet to the Gulf of Finland. Already after the First World War, naval officers knew exactly how it was done. And in June 1941, everyone was able to verify the effectiveness of this method. The minefields, installed by the Germans and Finns in a matter of days, tightly blocked the exit of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet to the greater Baltic [106]. And later, during the ill-fated "Tallinn crossing", the KBF suffered the main losses precisely from mines. In 1939-1940, having at its disposal a huge fleet and two large naval bases (Kronstadt and Tallinn), the Red Banner Baltic Fleet had every opportunity to cover the waters of the Gulf of Finland with continuous minefields. There was no need to make military specialists laugh with the proposals to "block the entrance to the bay with artillery

fire". Thus, it is not difficult to see that the Soviet proposals at the Moscow "peace" talks were not accidental, and the negotiations were not just a "talking shop" set up just to play for time. The Finns had no choice: peace or war. **In fact, he was offered two options for war: war immediately (in case of refusal of an agreement with Moscow) or war with a slight delay.** In the first case, Finland could enter the war with well-equipped defensive positions and some hope of receiving outside help. In the second case - after meeting Stalin's "minimum requirements" - Finland would have to enter the war in a completely hopeless situation, having neither allies, nor a fortification zone on the Karelian Isthmus, nor the ability to prevent the landing of a large Soviet landing 100 km from the capital. Subsequent events showed that in this most difficult, tragic situation, Finland made the right choice.

## Chapter 1.3

### THE MULTIFACETED MIRACLE OF THE "WINTER WAR"

The first Soviet-Finnish war (November 30, 1939 March 13, 1940) is described in sufficient detail in modern Russian historiography. Scrupulously, almost by the day and hour, the course of hostilities was analyzed, a number of major monographic studies were published [16, 18, 20, 21, 30, 31]. Of particular note is the fundamental work [33], built on the use of a huge array of primary documents from the Soviet and Finnish archives. Trying not to repeat unnecessarily what has already been said, we note only a few points that are directly related to the two main, "cross-cutting" topics of our study: the real foreign policy goals and aspirations of the Stalinist leadership, the real state and combat effectiveness of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The military results of the Finnish campaign shocked both friends and enemies of the Soviet Union. A huge world power threw into battle a 900,000-strong army equipped with thousands of tanks and aircraft, but at the same time it was not able - in the language of the Pravda newspaper of November 1939, "to curb the insignificant flea that jumps *and grimaces at our borders*." In his memoirs, K. Mannerheim very briefly and clearly formulated the general opinion: *"The first thing that caught my eye was the disproportion between a huge contribution and an insignificant result."* The general of the Wehrmacht, who is also the author of the classic work on the history of the Second World War, K. Toppelskirch, spoke just as definitely: *"The Russians throughout the war showed such tactical sluggishness and such poor command that an unfavorable opinion was formed around the world regarding the combat capability of the Red Army"* [51]. Such an assessment was considered generally accepted and indisputable for many years. Moreover, even "late-Soviet" historiography began to lean towards such an assessment. A typical example: the compilers of the collection [9], repeating in a brief introductory article devoted to the events of the "winter war", all the false clichés of Soviet propaganda, nevertheless admitted that "the war with Finland did not

bring glory to the winner. " In this issue, as in many others, the "troublemaker" was the historian and publicist

V. Suvorov. As always bright and passionate, V. Suvorov told the readers about how he modeled the "winter war" of 1939-1940. on an English supercomputer, and also set up an experiment on himself, climbing (without winter uniforms, with only one bottle of vodka) into a severe frost on a Christmas tree. Allegedly, both the computer and the personal feelings of the historian frozen to insensibility came to the same conclusion: it is impossible to break through the Mannerheim Line without an atomic bomb. It's impossible. Accordingly, *"The Red Army, having broken the Mannerheim Line, refuted and overturned the ideas of world military science ... The Red Army performed a miracle. Unnecessary, stupid, but a miracle ... From a purely military point of view, it was a brilliant victory, which has no equal in all previous and all subsequent history ..."* [58].

Oddly enough, but the version of the fierce anti-communist V. Suvorov surprisingly accurately "lay down" in the matrix of consciousness, prepared by many years of communist propaganda. This propaganda invariably tried to reduce all the events of the "winter war" exclusively and only to battles on the notorious "Mannerheim Line". This approach made it possible to solve **three problems at once**. Firstly, to reinforce the key thesis for the entire Soviet historiography that the only goal of the war was "protection of the northern approaches to Leningrad", which "protection" they tried to achieve by slightly moving the border on the Karelian Isthmus. The line of Finnish fortifications interfered with this "relocation" - so it had to be wiped off the face of the earth. Secondly, the constant reminder of "reinforced concrete bunkers spewing deadly fire" was perceived by readers far from the theory of military affairs as a completely "respectful", "objective" reason for the huge losses of personnel of the Red Army units. Thirdly, the breakthrough of the Mannerheim Line, which took place by the end of the third month of the war, could be presented both as a major success and as a reasonable explanation for why the war suddenly stopped. Alas, all this has very little in common with real historical events. Let's start with the

simplest. From arithmetic and geography. The length of the Soviet-Finnish border was about 1350 km. The construction of the "Great Finnish Wall" of such a length would not have had enough resources not only of Finland, but even of the huge Soviet Union. In reality, the line of long-term Finnish fortifications on the Karperesheik covered a section of the border with a length of about 100 km. Less than one tenth of the total length of the border. In other words, nine-tenths of the Finnish border was not covered by a single "bunker spewing deadly fire." Accordingly, it was possible to deal with the Mannerheim Line exactly as the Wehrmacht did in May-June 1940 with the incomparably more powerful French Maginot Line, i.e. bypass it, not at all trying to break through the fortified area "in the forehead." Rumors about the supposedly absolute "impassability of the terrain" to the northeast of the Karelian Isthmus are greatly exaggerated. Southern Finland is a quite inhabited and equipped region, in the Sortavala-Lappeenranta-Kotka strip there was a fairly dense road network. The terrain becomes even more passable precisely in the conditions of the winter war, when frost binds the surface of lakes and marshes with strong ice.

This is theory. Now let's turn to practice. The idea of a deep flank bypass of the Finnish fortifications around the northern coast of Lake Ladoga was invariably present both in the pre-war plans of the Soviet command and in the actions of the troops during the "winter war" itself. Let us turn once again to the "Plan of Operation to Defeat the Ground and Naval Forces of the Finnish Army" dated October 29, 1939 [97]. *"Upon receiving the order to advance, our troops simultaneously invade the territory of Finland in all directions in order to separate the grouping of enemy forces* (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *and, in cooperation with aviation, inflict a decisive defeat on the Finnish army. The main forces of our troops are attacking from the Vidlitsky direction and from the Karelian Isthmus the main grouping of the Finnish army in the area of Sortavala, Viipuri (Vyborg), Kyakisalmi (Kexholm). a) Vidlitsky direction - seven rifle divisions (rifle divisions), three corps artillery regiments, one artillery regiment of the RGK, one tank and chemical battalions ...*

*strip between the lake. Yanis-Yarvi and Lake Ladoga, **advance in a south-western direction, behind the lines of the enemy grouping operating on the Karelian Isthmus** (emphasized by me - M.S.), assist the 7th Army in defeating this grouping ... b) Karelian Isthmus - eight pages divisions, five corps artillery regiments, five artillery regiments of the RGK, two separate artillery battalions of BM (high power), three tank brigades ... The task is to break parts of the cover, seize the fortified Finnish area on the Karperesheyka and, developing the offensive in the northwestern and northern directions, in cooperation with troops of the Vidlitsky direction, to defeat the main grouping of enemy troops in the area of Sortavala, Viipuri, Kyakisalmi ... "* As you can see, the idea of

bypassing the "Mannerheim Line" and striking the flank and rear of the Finnish troops deployed on the Karelian Isthmus is spelled out in the plan quite specifically. It is worth paying attention to the fact that the grouping of Soviet troops in the "Vidlitsky direction" (i.e., the 8th army in the Ladoga Karelia) is attributed by the developers of the plan to the "main forces of our troops", and in terms of the number of rifle divisions this grouping is only slightly inferior 7th Army on Karperesheyka (family of eight divisions,

respectively). In addition to these two main groupings, it was also planned to create two auxiliary groupings (in reality they were organizationally consolidated into one 9th army), which, advancing in converging directions - from the north of Kandalaksha through Rovaniemi, from the south of Rebola through Kuhmo and Kayaaani, had to *"having mastered the area of Kemi, Oulu (Uleaborg), cut off communication between Finland and Sweden across the land border."*

Even without taking into account the presence of another operational direction (Murmansk) and the strength of the 14th Army deployed in this direction, it is easy to verify that, by the number of rifle divisions, the 9th Army (122nd, 163rd, 54th divisions) and the 8th Army (155th, 139th, 56th, 18th and 168th divisions) in the first days of the war even surpassed the 7th Army advancing on the Mannerheim Line (six divisions) [33]. In the future, there was a continuous build-up of the Red Army in all operational areas (in particular, at least 13 divisions were additionally transferred to the Ladoga and North Karelia), but at the same time, **no more than half of** the personnel were involved in the breakthrough of the Mannerheim Line at any stage of the war units and formations of the army.

Specifically, in numbers, the situation was as follows: with an average monthly strength of the entire grouping of troops of 849 thousand people, the average monthly strength of the troops of the North-Western Front (7th Army and the 13th Army formed at the end of December 1939) was 423 thousand people. The 9th Army (Northern Karelia) had an average monthly strength of 94 thousand people, the 8th and 15th Armies (Ladoga Karelia) - 271

thousand people [9]. Thus, at a distance of hundreds of kilometers from the nearest pillbox of the Mannerheim Line, a huge grouping of Soviet troops with a total number of **more than 350 thousand people operated**. What "miracle" did the Red Army perform there? What "brilliant victories that have no equal in history" did she win?

The first "miracle" was the very planning of the operation, in which the troops of the 9th Army were given an advance rate of 22 km per day. In winter, through the snow-filled wilderness of central Finland. And this despite the fact that on its own

territory, the advancement of rifle divisions to the border proceeded at a rate of 12-16 km per day, and even at these rates, the rear and artillery constantly lagged behind [33]. Another "miracle" can be considered the concentration of such large forces in an area almost devoid of roads and railways. It is noteworthy that, according to Mannerheim's pre-war calculations, *"in connection with the difficulties of transportation, the Russians could throw a maximum of three divisions into Karelia near Ladoga."* In fact, by the end of the war in Ladoga Karelia, about 15 divisions were concentrated (or advanced

to the front). Since the Soviet military-political leadership, right up to the very beginning of hostilities, did not decide on the main question - whether it was preparing for war or for a "triumphal march" - the stocks of fuel and ammunition accumulated in Karelia were minimal. So, according to the aforementioned plan of Meretskov, the troops of the "Vidlitsky direction" needed *"ammunition 3.5 ammunition and fuel for transport vehicles 6-7 refueling."* After the war became protracted, and the troops suffered huge losses in manpower and equipment, the Soviet command "unexpectedly" found out for themselves that there was practically nothing to deliver reinforcements and ammunition. The troops of the 14th, 9th, 8th and 15th armies got stuck in a deserted area devoid of local resources, and all the supplies were kept on one thread of the Murmansk (Kirovskaya, as it was called then) railway, the speed of the advance of military echelons along which, due to snow drifts and a huge overload of the line, decreased to 5-6 km per hour. Only the lack of powerful bomber aircraft among the Finns, capable of destroying two railway bridges across the Svir, saved the Soviet troops in Karelia from complete disaster [14]. However, even without that, the results of the hostilities were extremely disappointing.

In the first days of the war, the troops of the 8th and 9th armies successfully and relatively quickly advanced deep into Finnish territory. As Mannerheim writes, *"our weak units were forced to retreat under pressure from superior forces. The enemy, supported by tanks, advanced unexpectedly quickly; the sudden appearance of vehicles dressed in armor had a paralyzing effect on our troops, of which only rare units managed to get weapons to fight tanks."* The greatest success was achieved by units of the 8th Army, which on the Suojärvi-Tolvajärvi direction passed 100–120 km from the state border deep into Finland. But already in mid-December, the Finns made a partial regrouping of their frail forces and launched active counterattacks. Skillfully maneuvering ski battalions "cut", surrounded and destroyed in parts the huge and clumsy columns of Soviet rifle divisions. By December 24, 1939, the 75th and 139th Rifle Divisions of the 8th Army were thrown back more than 50 kilometers east of Tolvajärvi. The state of these formations can be judged because the 139th division left 2247 rifles, 165 heavy and 240 light machine guns on the battlefield, and by the beginning of January 30-50 people remained in its rifle companies, that is, no more than 30% of the regular strength [33]. Slightly better was the situation in the 75th division. At the beginning of January 1940, the

Finns launched a major (by their standards) offensive and, with the help of seven infantry battalions, surrounded them near the northeastern shore of Lake Ladoga, in the area of the city of Pitkyaranta. 18th Rifle Division and 34th Tank Brigade from the 8th Army. Despite the presence of a large number of tanks, ammunition and fuel surrounded (even by the end of February in parts of the 18th division and

The 34th Tank Brigade had up to 12 thousand shells and two refueling tanks [33]), their command chose the tactic of passively waiting for outside help. Already after the end of the war, on April 17, 1940, corps commissar Vashugin at a meeting of the top command staff of the Red Army described these events as follows:

*"The Finns surrounded our divisions in small units. It seemed to me that in order to encircle a division, you need to have three divisions. And how did it turn out there? This environment created psychosis among the encircled... I found out in great detail the encirclement of the 97th Infantry Regiment of the 18th Division. What was the environment of the 97th line regiment like? The regiment commander said that from the west there was about an enemy company, from the east there was less reinforced platoon, from the north there were regular troops - about a battalion that occupied fortified positions in the camp, but recently ours went to reconnaissance in this camp and did not find there completely an enemy. They did not see the enemy anywhere. There has never been an enemy from the south. And they considered themselves surrounded ... We took him out very simply. A couple of scouts came and said that the regiment was ordered to leave the encirclement. The garrison got up and left .*

Not everywhere, however, everything ended so simply and safely. During the long battles, the Finns were divided into separate groups and by the end of February they had almost completely destroyed the encircled group. Repeated attempts to release those surrounded by large forces (a total of four divisions were involved: the 60th rifle division, the 11th rifle division, the 72nd rifle division and the 25th rifle division) were unsuccessful. As trophies, the Finns got 128 tanks, 91 guns, 120 vehicles and tractors, and even the Battle Banner of the 18th Rifle Division [22, 33]. Only the cessation of hostilities on March 13, 1940 saved another, the 168th rifle division, from the same defeat. The commander of the 18th division, brigade commander G.F. Kondrashev was wounded, arrested on March 4 and subsequently shot. Commander of the 34th Tank Brigade Commander S.I. Kondratiev, chief of staff of the brigade N.I. Smirnov and the head of the Special Department of the brigade, Captain Doronin, shot themselves. The heads of the political departments of the division and brigade I.A. also committed suicide. Gapanyuk and I.E. Israeli. On March 8, the commander of the 56th Rifle Corps (which included the 18th and 168th divisions), commander I.N., will shoot himself. Cherepanov [33].

*"It must be said frankly that in mid-December the Finns took the initiative in the Petrozavodsk direction and held it almost until the end of the war,"* Shaposhnikov, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, was forced to admit, speaking at the already mentioned meeting of the highest command staff on April 16, 1940. [ 20]. A serious statement - taking into account the plans, the balance of forces and the composition of the weapons of the parties.

Events developed in a similar way among the dense forests of central Finland, in the offensive zone of the 9th Army. From November 30 to December 7 (on this day the 163rd Rifle Division occupied an important road junction in the village of Suomussalmi), the formations of the 9th Army, pushing back two battalions of Finnish reservists from the border, advanced, as they say, "little blood." Thus, the total losses of the 163rd division amounted to 243 people [33]. The situation changed dramatically after the arrival of the 27th Infantry Regiment in the battle area and the appointment of Colonel Siilasvuo (later General, one of the most famous and successful Finnish military leaders) as commander of all parts of the Finnish army in the Suomussalmi area. On December 15, the Finns recaptured



Suomussalmi, and by December 21, ski groups surrounded most of the forces of the 163rd Infantry

Division. To help the 163rd division, the Soviet command advanced the 44th rifle division. This division, which was part of the troops of the Kyiv Military District, arrived from the recently "liberated" Polish Tarnopol in the usual autumn uniforms: overcoats and tarpaulin boots. Meanwhile, the unusual frost in the battle area dropped to 40 degrees. Siilasvuo writes in his post-war memoirs: *"It was incomprehensible and strange to me why the Russians did not have skis and therefore could not tear themselves away from the roads."* K. Mannerheim served in the Russian army for 30 years. Therefore, without expressing any surprise, he simply states: *"The resistance of the group of the 163rd division was broken on December 30th. More than 5 thousand enemy soldiers were killed on the spot, about 500 people were taken prisoner. The trophies were very significant: 27 guns, 11 tanks, 150 trucks, a huge amount of infantry weapons and ammunition"* [22].

According to the documents of the Soviet headquarters, the losses of the 163rd division during the entire period of the fighting amounted to 3043 people killed and missing, 8558 wounded and frostbite, i.e. about 70% of the staff. As a "switchman" the Special Department of the 9th Army chose the commander and commissar of the 662nd regiment of the 163rd division, Colonel Sharov and the battalion commissar Podkhomutov. They were tried by

a military tribunal and shot. In the first days of January, the 44th division was finally surrounded and defeated. Siilasvuo writes: *"The panic of the encircled was growing, the enemy no longer had joint and organized actions ... The forest was full of running people ... At noon on January 7, the enemy began to surrender. Hungry and frozen people are coming out of the dugouts... We captured an unimaginably large amount of military materials, which our units could not dream of even in a dream. We got everything in perfect working order, the guns were new, still shining... Trophies amounted to 40 field and 29 anti-tank guns, 27 tanks, 6 armored vehicles, 20 tractors, 160 trucks, 600 horses..."* [33]. In

this quote, it is important to note the words: "people came out of the dugouts." In complete contrast to the generally accepted myth (the Finns are sitting in a warm pillbox, the Red Army men go on the attack in the bitter frost waist-deep in snow), the Finnish units continuously maneuvered in 40-degree frost, while the surrounded Soviet divisions had the opportunity to establish at least minimal conditions for personnel heating. It is worth noting that, according to the headquarters of the 9th Army, the losses of weapons and equipment of the 44th division were even greater than Siilasvuo could count: 4340 rifles, 350 machine guns, 87 guns of various calibers, 14 mortars and 37 tanks

[33]. The military tribunal found the commander of the 44th Infantry Division, brigade commander Vinogradov, the chief of staff, Colonel Volkov, and the head of the political department, Pakhomenko, guilty of *"criminally ignoring the orders of the high command ... scattered parts of the division into separate detachments and groups ... saving their own skin shamefully fled with a small group people behind."* The sentence was carried out on January 11, 1940 before the formation of the remnants of the division's personnel.

The crushing and shameful defeat of the main forces of the 9th Army, however, did not cool down the "offensive impulse" of the Soviet command. The idea of "cutting" Finland and capturing Oulu continued to hover in high offices. So, in the plan (practically not implemented) of the operation of the Baltic Fleet to seize the Åland Islands, drawn up on January 21, 1940, the importance of establishing full control over shipping and the Gulf of Bothnia was argued as follows. *"With the transition of our army to the offensive and the cutting of land communications in the Uleaborg area, maritime communications remain the only possible one in Finland"* [235].

In reality, instead of all these "Manilov projects", the efforts of the command of the 9th Army, numerous reinforcements which she continuously received, and the intense combat work of aviation were aimed mainly at saving another division, surrounded in the Kuhmo area (about 100 km south of Suomussalmi) - the 54th Mountain Rifle Division from complete defeat. Just as in other sectors of the boundless Karelian front, the Finns tore apart the column of the 54th division, which stretched for 25 km, into eight separate groups, and from February 1, they began their methodical encirclement and extermination. Despite the fact that this division - unlike many others thrown into the icy hell of the Finnish war - was an "old", personnel division, specially prepared for operations in the northern theater of operations, its command and personnel were unable to solve any combat missions. The commander of the Air Force of the 9th Army (hereinafter

- the commander of the Air Force of the entire Red Army) P. Rychagov reported on April 16, 1940 at the Meeting of the highest command staff: "Gusevsky (division commander) every day, and sometimes several times a day, sent alarmist telegrams ... Under the influence of these telegrams, they killed almost all the reserves of the 9th Army, which were there and came up, they threw a lot of people there and could not organize any offensive to liberate ... Aviation was obliged to bomb, shoot, guard it for 45 days. The division was fed by the 80th aviation regiment for 45 days, and this regiment actually saved it, an inactive division, from starvation and death, giving the Finns no peace day and night. Every day, at the slightest activity of the Finns, panic arose there, all the gradually arriving squadrons and battalions of skiers were sent there ... Gusevsky himself could not be influenced in any way, and there was no order in the besieged garrison" [20]. "The conclusion of peace," writes Mannerheim, "saved the badly battered 54th division, which had lost almost half of its composition and weapons" [22]. Judging by the data of the Soviet archives, the assessment of the Finnish marshal was very accurate - the losses of the division were estimated at 2691 people killed and missing, 3732 wounded and frostbite, which was 60% of the staffing of the Soviet mountain rifle division [33].

Thus, none of the tasks assigned to the troops of the 8th and 9th armies was completed. There is no need even to talk about "exit to the Swedish border", or about a blow to the flank and rear of the Finnish troops defending the "Mannerheim Line". At the time of the end of hostilities, the troops of the 8th Army advanced a distance of only 20-30 km from the 1939 border line in the Loimola-Suoyarvi direction. 60-70 km on the right flank of the army, in the direction of Ilomantsi. The troops of the 9th Army were almost everywhere driven back to their original positions.

For such modest results, a huge price was paid. The losses of the Red Army for three months of fighting in Karelia amounted to 141 thousand people.

The irretrievable losses of the 9th-14th army amounted to 13.5 thousand people, the total losses were 46 thousand. The 8th and 15th armies lost 31 thousand people killed and missing, the total losses of these two armies amounted to 95 thousand people [9]. For comparison, we note that the 12th and 13th infantry divisions of the Finnish army operating in Ladoga Karelia (together with separate battalions attached to them) lost a total of 4 thousand people killed and missing. 9.5 thousand people were wounded [33]. The fact that the losses of the attacking (and successfully attacking) Finnish army turned out to be **7-8 times less than the losses** of the Red Army can rightly be called "a miracle that refuted and overturned the ideas of world military science ...".

It should also be noted that the above terrifying figure of the losses of the troops of the 8th, 9th and 15th armies is most likely underestimated. The fact is that as a result of the conducted in 1949-1951. The Main Directorate of Personnel of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR of work on compiling the names of servicemen who died and went missing during the Soviet-Finnish war revealed a discrepancy with the data presented at the time by the headquarters of the units and formations. **31527 people disappeared to no one knows where** [9]. They were neither among the dead nor among the missing, which were taken into account in the reports of the troops until the end of March 1940. Of course, there is no way to establish the fate of these 31,527 people today, but with a very high degree of probability it can be assumed that a large part of them died precisely in the chaos of retreat and encirclement in Karelia, and not on the Karelian Isthmus, where relatively organized and orderly battles took place on the Mannerheim Line. If this assumption is correct, then we have to state that the losses of the Red Army in Karelia, "away from the Mannerheim Line", amounted to **almost half** (47%) of the total losses of the "winter war".

We must not forget that the "winter war" was fought not only on land, but also in the air. Even without opening a single reference book, one can confidently assert that there was no trace of any "Mannerheim flying line". Nevertheless, the actions of the Soviet Air Force during the "winter war" can be considered the clearest example of what the Marshal of Finland himself called "a huge contribution and an insignificant result."

A remarkable document has been preserved in the funds of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA): a translation of the article "Soviet Air War against Finland" by a certain Mr. Borgman from Helsinki, published in three issues (June 28, July 5 and 12, 1940) of the German military magazine "Deutsche Wehr" [96]. On the first page of the typewritten text is the resolution of the head of the Operations Department of the Red Army Air Force Headquarters, Major General Teplinsky: *"Check the numbers with our data. Make a summary of the main figures.* Filed by subordinates of General Teplinsky. *"By the beginning of hostilities, the USSR had 1800 aircraft at the front, by the end of the war 3353 aircraft, of which 60% were bombers."* But it must be borne in mind that the headquarters of the Red Army Air Force did not take into account the very numerous aviation of the Baltic and Northern fleets. According to modern data, the grouping of Soviet aviation in the Finnish theater at the time of the end of hostilities consisted of **3885 aircraft** (of which 508 aircraft were part of the Air Force of the Fleets), including 1732 bombers. Over the entire period of the war, this grouping carried out more than **101,000** sorties [52].

Everything is relative. In order to appreciate this figure - 101 thousand sorties - one should compare it with the quantitative indicators of the use of aviation in the largest battles of the Great Patriotic War: the Battle of Kursk - 118 thousand sorties from July 5 to August 23, 1943. The Battle of Stalingrad - 114 thousand sorties in seven months (from July 42 to February 43). No less indicative is the comparison of the size of the Soviet aviation grouping and the intensity of its use on the Finnish front with the figures characterizing the actions of the Luftwaffe. As you know, the largest German aviation grouping was created before the start of the offensive on the Western Front (invasion of France, Belgium and Holland) on May 10, 1940 - 3641 combat aircraft (excluding transport, medical, communications and reconnaissance aviation). By the beginning of the most fierce battles of the "Battle of Britain" (as of August 13, 1940), the strength of the Luftwaffe grouping was noticeably lower - 3067 aircraft, including 1847 bombers. Significantly smaller German aviation forces were concentrated near the western borders of the USSR on the morning of June 22, 1941 - 2344 aircraft, including 1236 bombers [48]. As you can see, the grouping of Soviet bomber aviation on the front of the war with the

"Finland booger" was in no way inferior in number to the forces of the Luftwaffe bomber aircraft, which were to "bomb Britain out of the war." In terms of intensity of use - significantly exceeded. During the entire period of the "winter war" (three months and 12 days), Soviet bombers completed 44,962 sorties, while German bomber aircraft completed only 16,850 sorties in three months and six days (from July 1 to October 6) [52, 53]. True, the last comparison is not entirely correct, since Soviet bomber aircraft in the Finnish theater of operations operated mainly against troops and fortified areas on the battlefield, while the Luftwaffe bombed large area targets (in other words, cities) deep in British territory. It would be more appropriate to compare the actions of the Luftwaffe during the "Battle of Britain" with the effectiveness of Soviet bomber raids on rear facilities (railway stations and stages,

ports, industrial enterprises, administrative centers) of Finland. In the aforementioned article "Soviet air war against Finland", Mr. Borgman gives the following quantitative parameters: 2,075 raids were made on 516 objects, during which 14,640 sorties were carried out, 100 thousand bombs of all types were dropped. Modern historians give somewhat smaller (and probably more realistic) figures: 55,000 high-explosive and 41,000 incendiary (i.e., much lighter) bombs [52]. These figures - 14.6 thousand sorties and 55 thousand high-explosive bombs - are quite comparable with the indicators of the combat use of Luftwaffe bombers (16.9 thousand sorties in three months, 30 thousand high-explosive bombs dropped on London also in three months, from September to November 1940). Only the results were absolutely incomparable.

German bombardments caused colossal destruction and resulted in numerous casualties. Already during the first raid on London, 300 people were killed and more than 1,300 seriously injured. During the first month of massive bombardments, in September (1940, more than 7 thousand people died in London. In total, during the "battle for Britain" from August 1940 to May 1941,

84,000 buildings, 250 thousand inhabitants were left homeless. Here is how W. Churchill describes one of the raids on May 10, 1941 in his

memoirs: *"More than two thousand fires broke out in the city, and we could not extinguish them, since about 150 water mains were destroyed by bombing. 5 docks and more than 70 critical facilities were damaged, half of which were factories. All the major railway stations, with the exception of one, were put out of action for several weeks, and the through tracks were fully opened to traffic only at the beginning of June. More than 3,000 people were killed and wounded"* [55]. In Manchester, the worst

raids took place on 23 and 24 December 1940. In two days (more precisely, in two nights), 2,500 people died and 100,000 were left homeless. On the night of 14 November 1940, 449 Luftwaffe bombers destroyed the city of Coventry. Huge damage was caused to Birmingham, Belfast, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol, Southampton ... In total, about one million buildings were destroyed throughout the country. According to information cited by W. Churchill, the total number of casualties was 43,000 killed and 51,000 seriously wounded. The result of the military operations of Soviet aviation on the rear facilities

of Finland (actions for which the Soviet Union "paid" not only with huge material costs associated with providing 14 thousand sorties, but also with the loss of the last remnants of an international reputation and a shameful exclusion from the League of Nations) turned out to be actually miserable. Here is what Mannerheim writes in his memoirs: *"Despite the huge number (about 2500 aircraft (this figure is underestimated. - M.S.), the Soviet Air Force did not have a decisive impact on the course of the war. Air strikes against troops, especially at the beginning the wars were timid, and the bombardments could not break the will of the nation to defend ... The Russians did not succeed at all in fulfilling the strategic task of breaking our external communications and achieving the collapse of traffic. Our shipping, concentrated in Turku, was not paralyzed, although the city was bombed more than 60 times ... The only route connecting Finland with foreign countries was the Kem-Tornio railway. It was the largest part of the export and import of military equipment. This route remained safe and sound until the very end of the war. True, some rail transport had to be done at night time, but for the most part, the railways coped with their tasks with honor. Small damage caused to them by enemy aircraft was quickly eliminated. The production of military equipment also proceeded without major disruptions"* [22].

In total, 256 stone and 1764 wooden buildings were completely destroyed in the cities and towns of Finland [52]. In other words, to destroy one wooden hut, on average, 7 sorties were spent, 27 high-explosive and 20 incendiary bombs were dropped. Borgman estimates the losses of the Finnish civilian population at 646 killed and 538 seriously wounded, Mannerheim writes that *"more than seven hundred civilians were killed, and twice as many were injured"* [22]. Modern historians give a figure of 960 civilians killed during the bombing [52].

In any case, these figures are completely incomparable with the number of civilian casualties in England.

Of course, the reader, who is little acquainted with the history of Stalin and his empire, may assume that such small casualties of the civilian population were connected with that. that Soviet aviation inflicted exceptionally accurate, sniper strikes on purely military targets. Not even speaking about. that if Stalin had the desire to reduce the number of victims among the Finnish workers to zero (it was enough just not to start a war), the facts and documents do not at all support the hypothesis of "pinpoint" bombing. The first air raids on Helsinki and Hanko, due to the extremely low accuracy of the bombing, led to numerous destruction and casualties in residential areas. Two bombs exploded even near the building of the Soviet embassy, lightly injuring several employees. Given the extremely undesirable at that stage of the war (the Soviet Union was preparing to plant Kuusinen's "people's government" in Helsinki) political consequences, as well as realizing the impossibility of an immediate and radical improvement in the quality of flight and tactical training of bomber aircraft crews, Voroshilov issued an order for a "categorical and unconditional" ban bombardment of "cities and civilians". However, all these "games and democracy" quickly ended when it became clear that instead of a triumphal march, the Red Army was drawn into a cruel, protracted, bloody war. On December 21, 1939, the head of the Main Armored Directorate of the Red Army,

Corporal Commander Pavlov, wrote a memorandum to People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov: *"We must shake mercilessly the whole of Finland, so that it would be disrespectful to others (in a year and a half, this is exactly how Stalin will deal with Pavlov: mercilessly, so that it would be disrespectful to others. — M.S.). I am sure that as soon as we finish with Finland (regardless of the use of means and methods), both the British and the French will forget about it. Based on this, I believe that it is possible and should subject all railway junctions, harbors and administrative centers of the country to complete destruction. Destroy military factories, sow mortal fear on the roads day and night"* [72]. Pavlov's advice (probably not his alone) was accepted and approved. On January 3, 1940, the Soviet Air Force received an order signed by Voroshilov, Stalin and Shaposhnikov, which demanded *"in the next ten days to deliver systematic and powerful strikes against deep rear facilities, administrative and military-industrial points"* [52]. Of course, it was not possible to shake Finland in 10 days, and all the attacks, growing in power, fell on Finnish cities and towns until the very end of the war.

E. Sinitsyn, a resident of Soviet intelligence in Finland, in his memoirs describes his first visit to Helsinki after the end of the "winter war" as follows: *"The city seemed to me dead, dirty and neglected. Destruction and charred skeletons of buildings were visible. Rare passers-by hurriedly squeezed among the sandbags at each entrance..."* [156].

It is noteworthy that the employees of the operational department of the Air Force headquarters left a comment in the margins of Borgman's article, from which it follows that *"not counting the URs, bridges, railway lines" "about 100 settlements" were bombed*. Mr. Borgman also noted the massive use of a new type of ammunition unknown to him. Judging by the description, we are talking about RRAB (rotary-scattering air bomb), nicknamed in Finland "Molotov's bread basket". This simple and effective device made it possible to fill up an area of up to one hectare with glass balls with an incendiary mixture of the COP. It is clear that the RRABs were by no means dumped for

destruction of "URs, bridges and railway lines", but to create massive fires in settlements with wooden buildings. With a red

pencil, the head of the operational department of the headquarters of the Red Army Air Force underlined the following phrases in Borgman's article. *"Soviet aviation failed to either tie up transport, or interfere with the work of the military industry, or disrupt production and distribution, or break the will of the population to resist ... The Kem-Tornio railway line was not bombarded at all ..."* The last remark is worth dwelling on in more

detail. Just like in Russia, the territory of Finland is inhabited and developed extremely unevenly. Accordingly, the dense network of railways in the south of the country becomes more and more sparse in the center, until it turns into a single "thread" that along the northern coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, through the cities of Oulu (Uleaborg) - Kem - Tornio goes west to Sweden and Norway, linking Finnish railways with ice-free Norwegian ports. The enormous strategic importance of the Oulu-Kem line should have been obvious. Equally obvious and indisputable was the presence of aviation technical capabilities for the systematic bombing of this highway (from Kem to the Soviet-Finnish border no more than 250 km in a straight line). And what is most surprising, forgetting about the railway, the Soviet command organized systematic bombardments of the large (on the scale of northern Finland) provincial center of Rovaniemi, located just 97 km along the highway from Kem.

According to the Finnish aviation historian K. Geust, 19 air raids were carried out on Rovaniemi, during which 700 high-explosive bombs were dropped. Particularly large were the raids on February 1 (DB-3-8; and SB-26) and February 21 (DB-3-13; SB-26). Just before the end of the war, on March 10, 1940, 6 four-engine TB-3 giants were even involved in an air strike on Rovaniemi. The last raid on this ill-fated city was made at 11 am on March 13, just one hour before the end of the hostilities of the "winter war" [52]. As a result of all efforts in the city, which did not have any noticeable military significance, 25 civilians were killed, but located just a hundred kilometers to the south-west, the strategic railway "was not bombed at all ..."

A discussion of the effectiveness of the use of bomber aircraft is impossible without taking into account the degree of enemy opposition. In the summer-autumn of 1940, the German bombers were confronted by a relatively small (relative to the size of the Luftwaffe group), but well-trained, equipped with early detection radars and quite modern aircraft, British fighter aircraft. The reservation about the "relative" small number of fighters of the Royal Air Force was not made by chance. Even at the most critical moments of August 1940, the number of combat-ready Hurricanes and Spitfires remained at the level of 700–750 vehicles [48]. The number and capabilities of the Finnish fighters were completely different. According to modern historians, by the beginning of the war, the Finnish Air Force had

145 aircraft of all types, of which 119 were in combat squadrons, including about 50 aircraft that, with more or less stretch, could be classified as "fighters" [52]. The most modern among them were **36 Dutch**

"Fokkers" D-21, in terms of their tactical and technical characteristics corresponding to the Soviet I-16 of early modifications (up to the "donkeys" of the 1939 model, the "Fokkers" fell short in all respects). By the day of the cessation of hostilities (March 13, 1940), 130 combat aircraft had arrived from abroad and were put into operation, while the irretrievable losses of Finnish aviation during the entire war amounted to 71 aircraft (including 36 shot down by Soviet fighters and bomber gunners, 6 shot down by anti-aircraft fire, 29 crashed) [52]. Such a ratio of losses and deliveries made it possible not only to maintain the number of aircraft in combat units of the Finnish Air Force at an approximately constant level, but even to increase it. So, by March 1, 1940, the number of relatively modern fighters in combat squadrons was already **77 aircraft** (24 Fokkers, 25 French Morans, 17 English Gladiators, 11 Italian Fiats) [52]. With such forces, Finnish aviation carried out 5693 sorties and inflicted

huge losses to the enemy.

Already on February 14, 1940, the head of the Main Directorate of the Air Force, Smushkevich, in a letter No. 487821 addressed to People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov, proposed to allocate 800 combat aircraft "to make up for the loss of aircraft for the front" (DB-3 - 180; SB - 320; I-16 - 100; I-153 - 200) [66]. The irretrievable losses of Soviet aviation (moreover, the losses calculated not according to the reports of Finnish pilots and anti-aircraft gunners, but according to declassified documents of Soviet archives!) amounted to about 600–650 aircraft, of which at least half were shot down by the enemy, and the rest were lost as a result of accidents [52, 64]. Hopelessly outdated (let's return this favorite expression to the Soviet "historians") "Fokkers" shot down (according to Finnish data) 120 aircraft of the Soviet Air Force, losing only 10 of their fighters in air battles [52]. In general, with the final ratio of the number of aviation groupings of 26 to 1, the ratio of combat losses was 8 to 1 in favor of the tiny Finnish aviation!

The fighter aircraft is not the only enemy of the bomber. There is also anti-aircraft artillery. True, it is almost impossible to hit an aircraft flying at high altitude and at great speed with an unguided projectile. The negligible chance of a hit has to be compensated by a large number of anti-aircraft guns and a colossal consumption of ammunition. For example, as of June 22, 1941, the Soviet Armed Forces had 7200 (seven thousand two hundred) medium-caliber anti-aircraft guns (76 mm and 85 mm) and 1400 small-caliber anti-aircraft guns (37 mm and 40 mm) [9]. In particular, the troops of the Moscow Air Defense Zone were armed with 779 medium and 248 small-caliber anti-aircraft guns, while the troops of the Leningrad Air Defense Zone were armed with 864 medium-sized guns and 16 small-caliber guns [54, 56]. By the beginning of the war, 5.03 million anti-aircraft shots of 76 mm caliber and 0.495 million anti-aircraft shots of 85 mm caliber were accumulated [74]. The plan for the production of ammunition for 1941, approved at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on February 14, 1941, provided for the production of 5 million anti-aircraft rounds of 85 mm and 76 mm caliber [75]. All Soviet and many modern Russian historians assess these numbers as completely insufficient. So, the authors of the most authoritative statistical collection write: *"At the beginning of the war, the Red Army clearly did not have enough anti-aircraft weapons. As a result, our troops turned out to be defenseless against enemy air strikes ... "* [9].



"Defenseless against enemy air strikes ..." Finland met the war with the Soviet Union, armed with **38 (thirty-eight) medium-caliber anti-aircraft guns** (76-mm Bofors M / 29) with 188 rounds of ammunition per gun and 53 (fifty three) small-caliber 40-mm "Bofors" M / 38. By the end of the war, thanks to urgent purchases abroad, the number of Finnish anti-aircraft artillery of these calibers increased to 81 and 100 guns, respectively. For comparison, we note that at the naval base of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in Kronstadt alone there were 48 anti-aircraft guns of 76 mm caliber and 8 anti-aircraft guns of 85 mm caliber, and all this was only in addition to the most powerful naval artillery [106].

Given that the height reach of small-caliber anti-aircraft artillery of those years did not exceed 2-3 km, its use only made sense to protect the combat formations of troops from enemy attack aircraft and low-flying bombers. For the defense of cities, Finland actually had only fifty 76-mm anti-aircraft guns. To put it simply and more precisely, most of Finland's rear facilities did not have any anti-aircraft cover at all, and Soviet bombers could operate over them, as if on a training ground. In such and such conditions, *"Soviet aviation failed to either tie down transport or interfere with the work of the military industry."* Moreover, Finnish anti-aircraft gunners announced the destruction of 314 Soviet aircraft. Even taking into account the fact that this figure is about twice as high, the effectiveness of the Finnish anti-aircraft artillery should be assessed as incredibly high. Thus, the consumption of ammunition amounted to only 168 shells of 76 mm per shot down (according to Finnish data) aircraft [52]. This is a phenomenal figure. Having made the simplest calculation, the reader can be convinced that if even **one tenth of the 5.5 million Soviet anti-aircraft shells were used up with the same** efficiency, then the entire Luftwaffe grouping on the Eastern Front would be destroyed to the last aircraft, only one anti-aircraft artillery, without the help of fighters ...

In the cold waters of the Baltic, no "floating Mannerheim line" was found either. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the actions of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (KBF) turned out to be amazingly low. By the way, Mannerheim himself, expressing surprise that *"the Russians did not concentrate the light forces of the fleet in the ports of the Baltic to combat our shipping"*, explains this in his memoirs by the fact that *"from the very beginning they counted on a 'lightning war' "*. In this case, the marshal was wrong. The plans and intentions of the Soviet military-political leadership were the most serious and far-reaching. Already on October 26, 1939 (this is not a typo, it was October!), at a time when "peace talks" were still underway in Moscow with the Finnish delegation on the issue of transferring several islands in the Baltic Sea to the Soviet Union and a small "shifting" of the border on the Karelian isthmus. The Military Council of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet issued Directive No. 1 op/575ss. In it, the 2nd Submarine Brigade was ordered to move into position in case of *"unrestricted submarine warfare against Finland"*, as well as for reconnaissance *"for the deployment and actions of the Swedish (and this is also not a typo) fleet"* [57]. On

November 12, the day before the Soviet-Finnish negotiations finally reached an impasse, the Military Council of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, in Directive No. 1 op / 606ss, set quite specific tasks for the submarine forces of the fleet:

*"- destroy the Finnish coastal defense battleships; - conduct reconnaissance of the deployment and activities of the Swedish fleet; - to stop the supply of supplies to Finland through the Baltic Sea and from the ports of Sweden*

*through the Gulf of Bothnia.* On November 23, 1939, the order of the commander of the KBF No. 5 / op once again, in the most categorical terms, formulated the tasks of the fleet: *" Interrupt the sea communications of Finland, preventing the delivery of troops and military equipment from outside, destroy coastal defense battleships and enemy submarines at sea and bay, preventing them from leaving*

*for the territorial waters of Sweden" [57].* A week later, the war began. First of all, it turned out that out of 49 submarines that were part of the combat structure of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, only 27 (55% of the total) are capable of participating in hostilities. Having mistakenly sunk the Estonian steamship Kassari (in neutral waters, outside the declared zone of the naval blockade), the submarine forces of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet could not, however, fulfill any of the tasks assigned to them. December 26, 1939 People's Commissar of the Navy of the USSR N.G. Kuznetsov, in his directive No. 4747, stated that the actions of submarines to blockade Finland were passive, and demanded that commanders *"act more decisively, with due risk."* On the same day, the commander of the KBF, V.F. Tributs, sent a radiogram to the commanders of submarine divisions with the following content: *"t. Stalin demands a decisive, bold,*

*daring fight against the enemy on communications, approaches to ports and in the ports themselves ... "* [57]. In the first days of February 1940, due to unprecedented cold, most of the Baltic was covered with ice, which made it impossible to continue the fighting of the fleet. It's time to sum up. They turned out to be discouraging. Ignoring the announced "sea blockade", from the beginning of November 1939 to the middle of January 1940, 349 (three hundred and forty-nine) transport ships successfully passed to the ports of Finland. Of the 27 KBF submarines, only eight attacked the enemy at least once. 19 submarines of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet failed to detect and attack enemy transport at least once in two months. And this is not in the vast expanses of the Atlantic, but in the narrow "neck" of the Gulf of Finland (the maximum distance from the Finnish to the Soviet coast is no more than 80-100 km). Eight submarines attacked a total of 11 ships, of which 10 had no escort or any weapons. Of the 11 ships attacked, only 5 (five) were sunk, including the ill-fated Estonian Kassari. Two transports were sunk by torpedoes, while 11 torpedoes were used up. Three unarmed ships were sunk by artillery fire (a more than strange use of submarines!), while 6 shells of 100 mm caliber and 602 shells of 45 mm caliber were used up [57]. Thus,

**encountering almost no armed** opposition either at sea or in the skies over the Baltic, the submarine forces of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet **were able to sink only 1.1% of the total number of transports that entered the ports of Finland.** This is how the "sea blockade" turned out. As for the task of "destroying the Finnish coastal defense battleships", these ships (and there were exactly two of them: Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen) remained safe and sound, despite all the efforts of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and its bomber aircraft. It remains to be assumed that the names of the heroes of the ancient legends of Kalevala, secret to the Finnish armadillos, saved them from death ...

Now we can return to the legend of the super-powerful and almost insurmountable Mannerheim Line. Here is what a characteristic fragment of this "non-science fiction" looks like in a brilliant performance by a talented publicist V. Suvorov:

*"The Mannerheim Line was built as an absolute frontier with a 100% guarantee of insurmountability... The best fortifiers in the world participated in its construction... Behind endless minefields, behind anti-tank ditches and granite gouges, behind reinforced concrete tetrahedrons and wire fences at ten, twenty, thirty, forty-seven rows of thick barbed wire on metal stakes, and so, behind these barriers - reinforced concrete casemates: three, four, five floors underground, ceilings - one and a half to two meters of fortification reinforced concrete, floor (this means "facing the battlefield". - M. C.) the walls are covered with armor plates, all this is littered with multi-ton granite boulders and covered with soil ... Inside they have, in each casemate, an ammunition and fuel depot, inside there are warm sleeping quarters, a rest room, and a kitchen, and a dining room, and a toilet, and plumbing, and a power plant, communication centers, hospitals - everything is underground, everything is under concrete ... Finnish soldiers know that in case of injury, an operating room is waiting for them deep underground, it is clean, dry and, again, warm ... "[58]. Much of this text is quite true. In particular - wire, ditches and gouges. It remains*

only to understand what all this means in practice. There is such a wise saying: "The generals are preparing for the last war." This rule is the best suited to assessing the line

of long-term Finnish fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus. *"Forty-seven rows of thick barbed wire on metal stakes,"* about which V. Suvorov writes with such admiration, as well as rows of machine-gun pillboxes echeloned to a depth of 90 km, were a truly insurmountable obstacle for infantry and cavalry of the era of the First World War and the Civil War. However, a large (two thirds) of the defensive structures were built in 1921-1924, when nothing more dangerous than the cavalry lava of Budyonny's cavalry was expected on the southern borders of Finland. By the way, from 1919 to 1931, Carl Gustav Mannerheim himself did not hold any official positions in the military department of Finland, so his "authorship" of these structures is another myth. But the main thing, of course, is different - by the winter of 1939, the notorious "Mannerheim Line", without having had time to fire a single shot at the enemy, was already hopelessly outdated. There were exactly two reasons for this. **One of them is called "tank", the other - "aircraft"**. The most massive light Soviet tank, the T-26, was indeed "light" - but only in comparison with other tanks, medium and heavy. It weighed 9750 kg (there were more weighty modifications), and this caterpillar steel colossus

could break seven, forty-seven or one hundred and forty-seven rows of "thick barbed wire" with the same ease with which Gulliver broke the thin threads that in terms of the Lilliputians who "connected" him, they were thick ropes. Having cleared the area from the "thick wire" and at the same time twisted the ill-fated "metal stakes" out of the ground, the T-26 light tank could come close to the pillbox - since machine-gun bullets of rifle caliber could only cut sparks on its 15-millimeter

armor. Then there were two possible options for action, depending on what kind of tank it was and how the embrasures were located in the pillbox. The usual ("linear") T-26 could break the armored shutter on the embrasure of the pillbox with several shots with an armor-piercing 45-mm projectile, disable the machine gun and shooters. The flamethrower ("chemical") version of the T-26 (OT-130) tank could pour 360 liters of KS fire mixture onto the embrasure, viewing slots and air intakes of the pillbox. It would be best to act in turn: first, the line tank breaks the armored shutters, then the flamethrower tank burns out the insides of the concrete box. There was also a third, most humane way to neutralize a machine-gun pillbox: the tank drives up to the embrasure and simply closes it

with its armored hull. That is why, with the advent of a mass of tanks on the battlefield, **the fortified area, devoid of powerful anti-tank weapons, lost its former value.** In other words, machine-gun pillboxes had to be supplemented (namely, supplemented, not replaced - a rapid-fire machine gun is quite effective to fight enemy infantry and cavalry) with artillery pillboxes. What the Soviet commanders and fortifiers understood perfectly well. So, already in the 13 fortified areas of the 1st stage (built in 1928-1937) there were already artillery firing structures. True, there were very few of them (on average, no more than 9% of the total number of pillboxes, and they were armed with obsolete "three-inch guns" of the beginning of the 20th century). For

example, in the Mogilev-Yampolsky UR there were 279 machine-gun pillboxes, and 18 semi-caponier guns. [60] In Minsk UR, at a front of 160 km, there were 242 machine-gun pillboxes (one-, two- and three-penetration), 9 anti-tank defense pillboxes with rotating turrets of the T-26 tank, 16 gun semi-caponiers for two 76.2-mm guns and one 4-gun caponier. Letichevsky UR (Ukraine) on the front of 122 km had 354 pillboxes, including 11 artillery. It is noteworthy that in the summer of 1941, the commander of the 12th Army, Major General Ponedelin, estimated these 343 machine-gun pillboxes (nearly three per one kilometer of the front!) With the words: *"UR is incredibly weak"* [50].

In the second stage of fortified areas (built in 1938–1940), the share of artillery installations rose to 22–22%. Finally, the fortified areas on the "new" (1939–1940 model) Soviet border (the so-called "Molotov Line") consisted of 40–45% of pillboxes with artillery weapons. Moreover, as this weapon, no longer old, decommissioned guns were used, but the latest semi-automatic artillery systems with excellent periscope optics.

Of course, the young Republic of Finland, with its meager military budget (and the absence of a multi-million army of free labor from Gulag prisoners) could not afford even a small fraction of such a luxury. In 1921-1924, 168 concrete structures for all purposes were built, including 114 simple one-story, single-hole machine-gun pillboxes and only 7 artillery pillboxes. From extreme poverty, pillboxes were built from concrete grade 350-450 (Soviet standards required the use of concrete grade 750 and higher in fortifications) and with "flexible reinforcement" (that is, ordinary wire was used instead of strong rod reinforcement). During the battles to break through the Mannerheim Line, some pillboxes were destroyed by 40-kg shells of 152-mm howitzers, although the "best fortification engineers in the world" designed them with the expectation of resisting a direct hit of a 100-kg shell of a 203-mm howitzer. bundles

wires sticking out of fragments of concrete blocks are clearly visible in modern photographs of the ruins of

pillboxes [62]. Most of the pillboxes were located on the surface, and only a few of them were partially cut into the slopes of the hills and folds of the terrain. There was no mention of "three, four, five floors underground". The reason for this is very simple: on the Karelian Isthmus, the soil is either rocky. either, on the contrary, groundwater is very close to the surface, or the pillbox had to be built in a swamp at all.

In 1930, the construction of the second phase of the Mannerheim Line facilities began. These were already well-made, but still machine-gun (two- or three-hole) pillboxes. In total, during that period, 48 pillboxes were built or reconstructed (in particular, by installing the same armor plates on the floor walls, which V. Suvorov writes about). Finally, in 1937-1939. Several (different sources give different numbers: from 5 to 8) large multi-pipe forts (the so-called "millionaire" pillboxes) were built, each of which housed several machine guns and 1-2 guns of 75 mm or 155 mm caliber. The total number of pillboxes on all defensive lines with a front length of 135 km did not exceed 170–200 [61, 62, 63].

It is difficult to give an exact figure, since different authors take into account firing and auxiliary structures in different ways, include or do not include Taipale (eight 120-mm and 155-mm guns) and Koivisto (twelve 155-mm and 254 mm guns). It is worth noting that Mannerheim himself highly appreciated only these batteries: *"The only fortified structures worth mentioning were the coastal artillery forts that covered the flanks of the main defensive line on the shores of the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga."* However, even a heavy naval gun is capable of delivering aimed fire at tanks only within the line of sight, i.e. at a distance of no more than 1.5-2 km, while 100 km of space between these forts was almost everywhere not covered by fire sheltered in concrete casemates of anti-tank guns. A one and a half meter layer of snow, which, according to V. Suvorov, amazed the electronic brains of an English supercomputer and

formed an insurmountable obstacle in the way of Soviet tanks, appeared by no means on the first day, and not even in the first month of the war. Let us turn again to Mannerheim's memoirs: *"The enemy had a technical advantage provided to him by the weather. The ground was frozen and there was almost no snow. Lakes and rivers froze, and soon the ice began to withstand any technique ... Unfortunately, the snow cover continued to be too thin to make it difficult for the enemy to maneuver. The Finnish infantry divisions were armed with anti-tank guns, but in scanty quantities ("at the last moment we received the 37-mm Bofors anti-tank guns. There were about a hundred of them now at the disposal of the army")* [22]. In fact, the main means of anti-tank defense of the "Mannerheim Line" were passive barriers: ditches, counterscarps, granite blocks and gouges. This is, of course, better than

nothing. And this fully corresponded to the ideas of military science in the 1920s. But with the massive use of tanks and artillery, the destruction of such barriers is only a matter of time. Moreover, for a very short time, which in the summer of 1941 was clearly demonstrated

tank units of the Wehrmacht, rapidly overcoming the endless rows of anti-tank ditches on Soviet territory. And this is despite the presence of 14,900 anti-tank guns in service with the Red Army [9]. The enthusiastic stories of V. Suvorov

about "warm sleeping quarters, rest rooms, canteens, power plants, communication centers, hospitals underground, warm and clean" could only cause a sad smile among the Finnish veterans of the "winter war". The pillboxes of the first stage of construction (and this is two-thirds of the total!) Was a concrete box without any internal equipment. They had no electricity, no running water, no latrines, no fuel storage for the stove. There were no armored shutters on the embrasures (so there was nothing to "break" with an armor-piercing projectile, it was possible to fill the insides of the pillbox with fire mixture on the move ...), the entrance doors were wooden, at best upholstered with sheet iron (such a door could be knocked out not only by a close rupture of a howitzer projectile, but even a bunch of grenades). Telephone communication with neighbors was not even in every pillbox, there were no outdoor surveillance periscopes at all. The most significant thing was that there was no forced ventilation in the pillboxes, and on a calm day, the room was filled with suffocating gunpowder in a matter of minutes of firing. Only in the extremely small "millionaires" was something of what V. Suvorov writes about. For example, such a "miracle of technology" as a ventilation unit with a manual (!) drive [31, 33, 61, 62, 63].

Primitive equipment and weapons, the weakness of anti-tank defense were a characteristic feature of the Finnish line of long-term fortification. But even the much more advanced "Maginot Line" and "Stalin Line", "Atlantic Wall" and "Western Wall" did not justify the hopes placed on them. And it is not accidental, just as it is not accidental that after the Second World War the expensive construction of the "Chinese walls" was forever stopped. To understand the reasons for this, we must return to the starting point, at the beginning of the 20th century, and understand where the idea of stationary defense came from at that time.

The most massive "three-inch" field artillery gun (for example, the Soviet divisional gun ZIS-3) weighs 1.2 tons and throws out a high-explosive fragmentation projectile weighing 6.2 kg. The shell of a "six-inch" (152 mm) howitzer already weighs 40-45 kg. But the weight of the howitzer itself is about 4 tons. To transport such a gun over rough terrain, you need a tractor (caterpillar tractor) or at least six strong "artillery" horses; The 203-mm projectile of the Soviet howitzer of the 1931 model weighed 100 kg, while the weight of the gun itself was 17.5 tons. Such a caliber and weight can be considered almost limiting for field artillery guns. Yes, from the point of view of production technology, it is possible to manufacture guns of a much larger caliber (up to 14-15 inches) weighing hundreds of tons. But such guns were installed only on heavy cruisers and battleships. Both the limited carrying capacity of the bridges and the sine law prevented their use on land, according to which, even when climbing a hill with an elevation angle of only 30 degrees, a pulling force equal to half the weight is required. A clear illustration of all that has been said can be provided by the figures characterizing the production of artillery pieces in the USSR. During the four years of the Great Patriotic War, the Red Army received 68.8 thousand guns of 76.2 mm caliber, 5 thousand guns and howitzers of 152 mm caliber, and only 100 (one hundred) howitzers of 203 mm caliber [9]. Larger caliber artillery systems were discontinued before the start of the war.

The presence of an objective limit for increasing the weight of field artillery shells opened up - as it seemed to many military specialists - the possibility of creating practically invulnerable long-term firing points (pillboxes). It only remained to calculate the required thickness and brand of reinforced concrete flooring, which could withstand multiple hits of shells weighing 50–100 kg. Carried away by these calculations, military engineers at first did not pay attention to the slight buzz coming from the sky. A bomber plane flew across the sky, which even in its first plywood-canvas samples easily lifted a 100-kg bomb. At the end of the 1930s, light twin-engine bombers (Soviet SB, English Blenheim) lifted bombs with a unit weight of up to 500 kg. The medium twin-engine bomber DB-3 took the FAB-1000 bomb, its peers, the English "Wellington" and the German "Heinkel-111", raised bombs of a unit weight of 1814 and 1800 kg, respectively. The heavy four-engine TB-7 in the reloading version was able to take a 5-ton bomb, and even a specially designed super-heavy 10-ton bomb was placed in the huge bomb bay of the English strategic Lancaster [76].

With the advent of ammunition of such power, the eternal competition of "sword and shield" was finally and irrevocably decided in favor of the "sword". Strictly speaking, spending an unimaginable amount of concrete and steel reinforcement, you can build a pillbox that can withstand a direct hit by a 5-ton bomb, but no country can afford to waste resources on the construction of "man-made mountain ranges" ... This is how the theory

of long-term engineering fortification looks like in the very the shortest summary. Let's turn now to practice.

In the summer of 1941, the following fortified areas stretched along the western border of the Soviet Union, from the Baltic to the Black Sea: Telshiai, Siauliai, Kaunas, Alytus, Grodno. Osovetsky, Zambrovsky, Brest, Kovelsky, Vladimir-Volynsky, Rava-Russian, Strumilovsky, Peremyshl, Upper Prut and Lower Prut. At a depth of 200-250 km from them, behind the line of the "old" border of 1939, there were fortified areas of the "Stalin line": Kingiseppsky, Pskov, Ostrovsky, Sebezhsy, Polotsky, Minsk, Slutsky, Mozyrsky, Korostensky, Novograd-Volynsky, Shepetovsky, Izyaslavsky, Starokonstantinovsky, Ostropolsky, Letichevsky, Kamenetz-Podolsky, Mogilev Yampolsky, Rybnitsky, Tiraspol'sky. The number of pillboxes in one UR was different and ranged from 206 to 439. In terms of the number and composition of weapons, the quality of reinforced concrete, the equipment with

special equipment (filtering units, wire and radio communications, electrical equipment, optical devices) any of these **pillboxes at least not inferior to the** defensive structures of the Mannerheim Line. Approximately half of the Soviet fortified areas were built on the banks of full-flowing rivers (Neman, Western Dvina, Bug, Dniester, Prut), which created an additional barrier to the advancing enemy.

The result is known. The Germans passed through some of the above URs, not even paying attention to the empty boxes of pillboxes abandoned during the stampede. Through others they broke through with battles. As a rule, these battles lasted no more than two or three days. Particularly fierce fighting broke out in the early days of the war.

on the line of the new border: the garrisons of some pillboxes of the Grodno, Rava-Russky, Przemysl fortified areas desperately resisted until June 26-27, 1941. June. With rare exceptions, German tanks bypassed the fireworks of the fortified areas, without getting involved in protracted and fraught with heavy battles. Luftwaffe aviation (the number of which on the thousand-kilometer front from Riga to Odessa was smaller than the number of Soviet Air Force

aircraft over the Karelian Isthmus in February 1940) paved the way for the advancing Wehrmacht tank divisions and was only occasionally involved in the fight against pillboxes. The firing structures of the "Molotov and Stalin lines" were quickly and confidently destroyed by the joint actions of artillery and special assault groups of the German infantry. Artillery (including anti-aircraft and anti-tank) fired aimed at the embrasures of pillboxes, suppressing their fire. In the meantime, assault groups approached the pillboxes closely and broke through walls and ceilings with powerful high-explosive charges. As A. Isaev rightly noted: *"The mechanism of the army of the 20th century without delay ground concrete boxes with machine guns" [50].*

In the winter of 1939/1940, the command of the Red Army concentrated on the Karelian isthmus colossal forces.

Already in the first ten days of the war, nine rifle divisions and six tank brigades, 200 thousand people, 1.5 thousand guns and mortars, more than 1000 tanks and armored vehicles were brought into battle. By the beginning of the "second general offensive" (February 6, 1940), twenty-one rifle divisions (7, 24, 42, 43, 51, 70, 80, 90, 100, 113, 123 and 138th in the 7th Army; 4th, 8.17, 49, 50, 62, 136.142 and 150th in the 13th Army). In addition to the numerous divisional and corps artillery, the front included 13 regiments and 4 BM artillery divisions (high power). A total of 5.8 thousand guns and mortars (including 767 guns and howitzers of 152 mm caliber, 96 howitzers of 203 mm caliber and 28 super-heavy 280-mm mortars, throwing a projectile weighing 286 kg). During January-February 1940, an additional 29 air regiments were relocated to the Leningrad Military District and to Estonian airfields, incl. 3 heavy bombers and 5 long-range bombers [77].

But even this was not yet the limit of the possibilities of a great power, whose army was supposed to save the great Stalin himself from the shameful embarrassment. In March 1940, 58 divisions were deployed on the front of the war against the "insignificant flea" [20]. In particular, more than half a million people, 114 thousand horses, 40 thousand cars, 7.1 thousand guns and mortars were concentrated on the Karelian Isthmus. The number of tanks exceeded 3 thousand [9, 33]. Even if we subtract 492 light amphibious tankettes T-37 / T38 from this number, it turns out that on average more than 10 Soviet tanks attacked one pillbox of the Mannerheim Line.

By concentrating such overwhelming power, the Soviet command could use - and used in reality - all conceivable ways to break through the fortified area. Aviation in the course of 19.5 thousand sorties dropped **10.5 kilotons of bombs** on the pillboxes of the Mannerheim Line (a figure, as we see, is quite equivalent to the power of tactical nuclear weapons, with the only difference that a 10-kiloton atomic bomb creates ultra-high pressure in one - the only point



and thousands of high-explosive bombs "covered" the fortified area much wider and more efficiently). "Not

*every bomb can hit the target exactly," E.S. Ptukhin, - but if a bomb of 500 kg falls next to the pillbox - this also acts morally and financially. We know cases when a bomb hit near a pillbox, and people were pulled out of the pillbox, bleeding from their noses and ears, and some completely died ... We had 2,500 planes flying during the day and 300-400 planes at night ... Look to Vyborg - nothing was left of it. The city is completely destroyed" [20]. Soviet artillery pounded concrete boxes day and night with heavy howitzer shells, **on some days up to 230 thousand shells fell on the Finnish fortifications.** Invulnerable to machine-gun fire, tanks were*

brought on armored sledges to the walls of pillboxes by sappers and high-explosive charges. If, with such an inequality in forces and means, the Mannerheim Line could hold out for at least one week, this should already be called the greatest achievement. Marshal Mannerheim himself did not count on more before the war. V. Tanner in his memoirs conveys his opinion expressed in October 1939, on the eve of the start of Moscow negotiations: *"Finland, even theoretically, could not wage war: the armament of the army was insufficient and outdated, the ammunition would have been enough for at most two weeks of hostilities"* [23]. The Finns held back the onslaught of the armored horde for three whole months! To this miracle, the words of V. Suvorov about *"a brilliant victory, equal to which in all previous and all subsequent history"* are quite applicable.

No...".

And yet, the main miracle happened in the late evening of March 12, 1940. By this moment, the total losses of the Finnish army (killed and wounded) exceeded 68 thousand people, i.e. accounted for approximately 40% of the initial strength of the active army [22]. Those who remained in the ranks were extremely tired of non-stop battles without the possibility of a change and rest. The retreat of the Finnish army to Vyborg (from the top of the "triangle" of the Karelian Isthmus to its base) meant a multiple increase in the length of the front, which had to be held by forces that were fading before our eyes. The balance of forces on the Karelian Isthmus in early March was as follows: **6.5 to 1 in personnel, 14 to 1 in artillery. 20 to 1 in aviation** [33]. But even these amazing figures do not reflect the hopelessness of the situation in which Finland found itself: in reserve, the Red Army command had hundreds of thousands of soldiers, many thousands of tanks and aircraft, and it could continuously increase the size of its grouping up to any required level, in while Mannerheim had 14 last battalions of poorly trained reservists [22]. This was exactly the situation at the front at the time when negotiations began in Moscow on March 8, 1940, which ended on the night of March 12-13 with the signing of a peace treaty, according to which hostilities ceased on March 13 at 12 noon. Finally, the Stalinist leadership managed to commit another crime against the Soviet and Finnish peoples. Under the terms of the peace treaty, the city of Viipuri (Vyborg) went to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, late in the

evening of March 12, units of the 7th and 95th rifle divisions of the 7th Army received an order to take the city by storm.

None of the Red commanders who had gone through the terrible "school of 1937" dared to prevent this madness. Massive and devoid of any military (and any other) sense, the murder of Soviet and Finnish soldiers, civilians of Vyborg continued until the last minutes of the ceasefire period established by the agreement. It was not possible to completely "take over" the city, which formally and legally had already become Soviet, did not succeed. At 12 noon, Foreign Minister V. Tanner spoke on Finnish radio and informed the citizens about the signing of the peace treaty. At 15:30 Finnish troops lowered the state flags from the fortress and Vyborg railway station and left the city in an organized manner. War is over.

## Chapter

### 1.4 WHY STALIN PARED FINLAND

War is over. Exhausted, mortally tired people, who still did not fully believe that it was they who were lucky enough to survive, came out of the forests, dugouts and dugouts. Vigilant "organs" were forced to record cases of spontaneous fraternization. And then, on both sides of the former front, a difficult process of comprehending the results of the brutal confrontation began.

March 14, 1940 72-year-old Marshal Mannerheim signed his last order of the "winter war":

*"Soldiers of the glorious army of*

*Finland! A harsh peace has been concluded between our country and Soviet Russia, which has handed over to the Soviet Union almost every battlefield on which you shed your blood in the name of everything that is dear and sacred to us. You did not want war, you loved peace, work and progress, but you were forced to fight, and you did a great job, which will be inscribed in golden letters in the annals of history...*

*Soldiers! I have fought in many fields, but I have not yet seen warriors who could compare with you. I am proud of you as if you were my children. I am equally proud of the sacrifices that a simple guy from a peasant hut, a factory worker and a rich man brought to the altar of the Fatherland..." [22].*

With undisguised pride, Mannerheim writes in his memoirs that this order "transmitted over the radio and hung on the walls of all the churches in the country."

Marshal Voroshilov did not say anything of the sort to his fighters and commanders. And this is not only because the illiterate Stalinist "nominee" was deprived of literary talent ... Nevertheless, the propaganda machine continued to work and churned out new "truths" with a strained creak. About the "people's government of Mr. Kuusinen", about "do not cross the border with Sweden", about the "red banner over the presidential palace in Helsinki" was temporarily forgotten. It turns out that the war was fought because *"the White Finns, hoping for their fortifications, wanted to take the Soviet Union to the Urals, but the Red Army smashed all their fortifications, and they, seeing their death, came to the USSR with a request to make peace."* These words, as a typical example of "healthy statements of the bulk of the Red Army soldiers," were cited in his report dated March 18, 1940 by the head of the Special Department of the GUGB NKVD for the Leningrad Military District, State Security Major Sidnev [78].

Behind the carts of the Red Army moved fat herds of "engineers of human souls", i.e. lured party journalists and writers who were in a hurry to glorify the new successes of the Soviet government: *"... The famous center of obscurantism, the Valaam Monastery ceased to exist ... The documents of the monastery archive convincingly show that the activity of the monastery over the past two decades has become one of the important links in the complex of measures taken by the imperialists different countries to create a springboard for an attack on the USSR ... Representatives of the Red Army hung a red flag on the bell tower of the Transfiguration Cathedral. In the auditorium, where for hundreds of years only the nasal sermons of the Chernorizians were heard, in a full voice*

*human speech sounded - brigade commissar Kadishev read a report on the international situation to the Red Army men ...*

*... We enter a large three-story building, on the roof of which the letters "Kino" sparkle. Here, at one time, the White Guards demonstrated anti-Soviet films, and held meetings in the foyer, calling for crusades against Leningrad and the Urals ... A Russian library was located on the street adjoining the central avenue. The so-called "reading circle" gathered here, where the decaying White Guards raised their spirits with anti-Soviet conversations and reading soiled books ... " [112].*

Alas, the spirit of the "decaying White Guard" did not completely disappear. Major Sidnev, mentioned above, was forced to note in his report *"the sorties of a provocative and defeatist nature that took place on the part of individual fighters and commanders."* From the examples cited by Comrade Sidnev, it follows that, despite the most severe terror and continuous propaganda chatter, far from all Soviet people have lost the ability to adequately perceive what they experienced and saw: *"- how many people died, and we will be given only swamps. After all, all countries will laugh at us, because we, even a small state, could not win even then ...*

*- it's good that we concluded a peace treaty with Finland, otherwise the White Finns would have ruined half of the Red Army ... - our*

*generals, despite the fact that since the morning of March 13 it was known that peace had been concluded, nevertheless began artillery preparation and attack ... The assault on Vyborg is demonstration of the desire of our generals to make unnecessary sacrifices ...*

*- the whole war with Finland came down to the fact that the USSR annexed a piece of land and suffered hundreds of thousands of victims ... "*

And what Comrade Sidnev didn't like at all - in the fire of battle and in the blinding shroud of a snowy blizzard, the Red Army soldiers still managed to discern a piece of another life: *" White Finns live better than ours, they all have good houses, and our collective farmers do not have any such houses, even the sauna among the Finns is much more cultured and better than the house of a collective*

*farmer" [78]. In a word, Commander Grendal, commander of the 13th Army, had every reason to lament that "the political education of our fighter left much to be desired. I had to read the reports of special organs, and a lot of bastards came to light, individual moments of a counter-revolutionary nature ... We still need to work on our fighter. 22 years of existence of Soviet power have not yet set some brains" [20]. Urgent tasks and plans for "resetting the brains" were discussed at a meeting on ideological work in the Red Army,*

*held on May 13, 1940. There, the head of Glavpur (and Deputy Commissar of Defense ex officio) Comrade Mekhlis uttered an absolutely delightful phrase: "A collision with reality demagnetizes our fighter and commander, accustomed to considering the population of foreign countries from a general, superficial point of view" [80]. True, it is not entirely clear: where and when did "fighters and commanders" (for the most part, collective farmers without a passport who have neither the right nor the opportunity to move to a neighboring city) learn to consider the "population of foreign countries"? And why obviously false*

the fabrications of the Mehlis department about "relentless poverty and brutal exploitation" should be considered just a "superficial" point of view?

March 29, 1940 gave an official assessment of the "current moment". speaking at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the head of the government and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov: *"It is known that Germany's desire for peace, expressed at the end of last year, was rejected by the governments of England and France ... Under the pretext of fulfilling their obligations to Poland, they declared war on Germany. It is now especially clear how far the real aims of the governments of these powers are from the interests of disintegrated Poland or Czechoslovakia. This can already be seen from the fact that the governments of England and France proclaimed their goals the defeat and dismemberment of Germany ... Since the Soviet Union did not want to become an accomplice of England and France in pursuing this imperialist policy against Germany, the hostility of their positions towards the Soviet Union increased even more, clearly testifying how deep are the class roots of the hostile Policy of the imperialists*

*against the socialist state"* [73]. The roots were indeed very deep. So deep that in all post-war Soviet textbooks, diametrically opposite accusations against the Western powers - accusations that they did not actively oppose Germany's "desire for peace", abandoned Poland to its fate and waged a passive "strange war" - were also substantiated by references on the class hostility of the world bourgeoisie to the "first state of the workers and peasants." Having reprimanded his future allies in the anti-Hitler

coalition, as well as reporting to the assembled shepherds and milkmaids about the friendship with Hitler growing stronger with each new act of aggression (*"new, good Soviet-German relations were tested by experience in connection with the events in former Poland and sufficiently showed their strength "*), Molotov finally moved on to summing up the results of the Finnish war: *"The People's Government of Finland spoke out in favor of the fact that in order to prevent bloodshed and alleviate the situation of the Finnish people, one should meet the proposal to end the war. Then we accepted* (as in the text, it would be better to use the words "worked out", "formulated") *conditions that were soon accepted by the Finnish government ... Soon an agreement was reached between the USSR and Finland. In this regard, the question arose of the self-dissolution of the People's Government, which they carried out ... Thus, the goal set by us was achieved and we can express full satisfaction with the agreement with Finland "[73].*

Judging by the newspaper report, Molotov's last words were met with stormy applause from the audience.

And really, what is better? Everything happened solely in accordance with the wishes of the broad masses of the people. First, the working people of Finland, who had risen from the hell of capitalist exploitation, wanted to overthrow the government of the "bloody buffoons" and the "White Finnish Mannerheim bandits". Please - the fraternal Soviet Union sent a million-strong army to their aid and poured 55,000 high-explosive bombs on Finnish cities. Then the "people's government" decided to step on the throat of its own song and self-destructed. Excellent, since there are no other goals than to help "Mr." Kuusinen in everything,

there never was a Soviet leadership, it readily met the new wishes of the working people and ended the war. Laughter with

laughter, but no reasonable explanation for the end of the war was officially named until the self-dissolution of the Soviet Union itself in December 1991. I hope the reader will excuse us for not classifying the "strengthening of the security of Leningrad" (which "strengthening" was supposedly achieved after the destruction of the fortifications separating Finland from the USSR) as a reason for the unexpected end to the war...

The main results of the war were summed up, of course, not in the Supreme Soviet, but in completely different offices. From April 14 to 17, 1940, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks hosted a meeting of the commanding staff of the Red Army, dedicated to the analysis of the combat operations of the Finnish war. Almost all of the country's top military and political leadership (Stalin, Molotov, People's Commissar for Defense Voroshilov, Deputy People's Commissars Kulik and Mekhlis, Chief of the General Staff Shaposhnikov, Chief of the Main Intelligence Directorate Proskurov) and several dozen

commanders in ranks from major to commander of the 2nd rank took part in the Meeting. (colonel general). Transcripts of the speeches of the Conference participants were declassified and published in the late 1990s [20]. The study of these documents forces us to reconsider many established stereotypes. Contrary to popular misconception, **Stalin was not at all dejected, appalled, or even just upset by the level of combat effectiveness of his army.** At least, this is the line of behavior, this is the nature of the discussion, he asked the high assembly. Despite the fact that many facts of unsightly and mass participants in the Meeting spoke about the even examples of blatant carelessness, tragic, led to disorganization, weak and illiterate management at all levels, Comrade Stalin was quite complacent. He paternally scolded the guilty, praised the Red Army as a whole, not forgetting to gently point out individual shortcomings, and willingly joked a lot. The situation was purely family - a meeting of a strict father with his beloved and loving sons. The general mood is difficult to convey in short words, so we are forced to offer the reader lengthy quotations.

**Kurdyumov.** *I am reporting here with full responsibility that it is impossible to fight in 40-degree frost in boots, not even in torn ones, and in good boots, because in a few days there will be 50% frostbitten ... There is a law of physiology, at 5- On the th day, such a cooling is obtained that, regardless of the use of vodka, fat, the body's resistance will decrease.*

**Stalin.** *Comrade Kurdyumov.*

**Stalin.** *You have one agent in England, what is his last name, Cherny, who is he?* **Proskurov.** *He's already here, he's not an agent, but an air force attaché, Brigade*

*Commander Cherniy.* **Stalin.** *He wrote that in a few days there would be a big air raid on the Baku oil fields. A few days later he wrote, giving details. Six days have passed, two or three weeks have passed, and there are no*

*additions.* **Proskurov.** *He arrived and could not*  
*report anything.* **Stalin.** *And this is Cherny, the man you trust... You argue that he is an honest man. I say that an honest man, but a fool. (Laughter).*

**Oborin.** Now about intelligence. I make some claim to intelligence. I must say that we did not have undercover intelligence. **Stalin.** She is not. Does she exist? Does it exist?

Should it exist? **Oborin.** I think it should. And we have? Finland is at hand, but we did not know what she was

doing. And I'm sure that money is released for this? Right? **Stalin.** Send three or four tourists, and they will do everything. **Oborin.** Although I am a bad scout, but if they

gave me a business trip there, I would look out for everything

(laughter). **Chuikov.** There was no way to get to Gusevsky (commander of the 54th division of the 9th Army) to check him,

but he was lying ... Gusevsky misled us with his panic telegrams ...

**Stalin.** Everyone who is surrounded is considered a hero. **Chuikov.**

Couldn't get through. **Stalin.** They

didn't want to break through... The circle narrows around those surrounded, and each point is aimed at, and every Finn, Tatar, Chinese will shoot if they sit for a long time... So Gusevsky doesn't

walk in your heroes? **Chuikov.** No. **Stalin.** God bless. **Chuikov.** The 9th

Finnish division,

which surrounded the

54th, suffered heavy losses. IN

she, except for the elderly from 40 years and above and women, no one was left.

**Stalin.** But still, you were surrounded, not the old people ...

**Zaporozhets.** There were many crossbows and desertions.

**Stalin.** Were there deserters?

**Zaporozhets.** A lot of. (According to the reports of the Special Departments of the NKVD, from January 25, 1940 to the end of the war, 3644 deserters were detained. - M.S.)

**Stalin.** Did you go to your village or did you sit in the rear?

**Zaporozhets.** There were two categories. One of them fled to the village, then letters were written from there... I think that the local authorities did not fight well here. The second - they ran no further than the wagon train, dugouts, to the kitchen. Several of these people were shot... When the NKVD barrage detachment appeared, it helped us a lot... There was such a case in the 143rd regiment. During the day, the regiment fought, and by the evening this regiment had 105 crossbows. There are 105 crossbowmen in one regiment. **Stalin.** Are they shooting in the left hand?

**Zaporozhets.** They shoot either in the

left hand, or in the finger, or in the flesh of the foot, and not one of them will mutilate himself.

**Stalin.** There are

no fools. (Laughter). **Stern.** There

is nothing to hide a sin, comrades, we did not start brilliantly in this war. And the fact that we achieved a relatively quick, under the most difficult conditions, a historic victory over the Finns, we owe this, first of all, to the fact that Comrade. Stalin himself directly took up the task of directing the war, putting everything in the country at the service of victory. And a "civilian," as Comrade often calls himself. Stalin began to teach us order, first of all, and the conduct of operations, and the use of infantry, artillery, aviation, and the work of the rear, and the organization of troops. **Stalin.** Just a wonderful, happy person! How could I do it alone? And aviation, and artillery ...

**Stern.** *Tov. Stalin, only you, with your authority in the country, could so unusually quickly put everything at the service of victory and put us all in, and sent us the best forces in order to win this victory as soon as possible ... Comrade*

Khrulev, head of the supply department of the Red Army. Stalin good-naturedly encouraged him: "Don't get excited, they will confuse you, they will attack you, hold on tight" - then he began to ask questions himself.

**Stalin.** *How is dried fish?*

**Khrulev.** *I'll report now.*

**Stalin.** *How's the smoked*

*sausage? Khrulev. I will report. Allow me to report on the quantities that we have achieved in power ...*

**Stalin.** *They didn't say anything*

*about vodka. Khrulev. They know more about vodka than I do, because they drank and I didn't.* The most harsh criticism had to be heard by the commander of the 15th Army, Kovalev. It was hardly he who was the most to blame (commander of the 2nd rank Kovalev arrived on the front of the Finnish war on January 3, took command of the 15th army on February 12, when the encirclement of the 18th and 168th rifle divisions, the 34th brigade became already a fait accompli), but it just so happened - Stalin spoke to him very harshly. The final conclusion of this, the toughest conversation of all time,

was reduced to the need for restructuring. **Stalin.** *Tov. Kovalev, you are a wonderful person, one of the rare civil war commanders, but you have not reorganized in a modern way. In my opinion, the first conclusion and fraternal advice is to reorganize. You are the most late in this restructuring. All our commanders who had experience in the civil war reorganized. Frolov rebuilt well, but you and Chuikov can't rebuild. This is the first conclusion. You are a capable person, brave, you know your business, but you are fighting in the old way, when there was no artillery, there was no aviation, there were no tanks, then they let people in, and they took. This is the old method. You are a capable person, but you have some kind of hidden pride that prevents you from rebuilding. Admit your shortcomings and rebuild, then*

*things will work out. Kovalev. Yes, comrade. Stalin.*

The Conference participants tried not to talk about the correlation of forces on land, in the air and at sea. The Chief of the General Staff, who could not stop talking about this, gave the following assessment: *"I believe that the superiority of forces that we concentrated on the front was absolutely correct in strategic and tactical respects."* Almost the only one who remembered the huge losses of the Red Army was the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, the head of the Main Artillery Directorate, the future Marshal Kulik. True, at the same time, he underestimated the death toll by almost three times: *"That experience, that blood shed by our 50 thousand comrades, the best former fighters, should be used and not brag, but here it was a form of boasting. It was not so smooth, comrades, in fact, as you pictured here ..."* At the last meeting, on the evening of April 17, the Host himself delivered the final word. And so he painted such a "smooth picture" that not one of the comrades who spoke earlier in his boasting dared to reach.



Stalin began by explaining to the high assembly, in his favorite manner of questions and answers, with repeated repetitions, that the "government" - i.e. he himself never made a mistake in anything: *"The first question is about the war with Finland. Did the government and the party do the right thing in declaring war on Finland? Could the war have been avoided? It seems to me that it was impossible. It was impossible to do without war. The war was necessary, since peace negotiations with Finland did not yield results, and the security of Leningrad had to be ensured unconditionally, because its security is the security of our Fatherland ... The second question is, was our government, our party in a hurry, that they declared war at the end of November, at the beginning of December, could it not be possible to postpone this question, wait two or three or four months, prepare and then strike? No. The party and the government did absolutely the right thing, do not put off this matter ... There, in the West, the three largest powers grabbed each other by the throat, when to decide the question of Leningrad, if not in such conditions, when their hands are busy and we see a favorable situation **in order to hit them at that moment** (hereinafter, it is emphasized by me. - M.S.) ... Postponing this matter for two months would mean postponing this matter for 20 years, because you cannot foresee everything in politics. They are fighting there, but the war is somehow weak, either they are fighting, or they are playing cards. **Suddenly they will take and reconcile, which is not excluded.** Therefore, a favorable situation for raising the question of the defense of Leningrad and the provision of the state would have been missed ...*

*Third question. Well, war has been declared, hostilities have begun. Have our military commanding bodies correctly deployed our troops at the front? As you know, the troops were deployed at the front in the form of five main columns ... Was this deployment of troops at the front correct? I think that's right.*

*The largest column of troops was on the Karelian Isthmus in order to exclude the possibility of any accidents against Leningrad from the Finns ... Secondly, to reconnoiter the state of Finland on the Karelian Isthmus with a bayonet, its position of forces, its defense. Thirdly, to create a bridgehead for jumping forward and moving on ... (After that, Stalin listed the rest of the operational groupings, strangely referred to as "columns", for each of which two tasks were repeated with overwhelming monotony: "reconnaissance with a bayonet" and the capture of bridgeheads "for troops, which will then be brought up.*

*Why was it impossible to strike from all five sides and pinch Finland? We **did not set such a serious task**, because the war in Finland is very difficult ... We knew that Peter I fought for 21 years to recapture all of Finland from Sweden ... We knew that after Peter I, his daughter Elizabeth waged a war to expand Russia's influence in Finland Petrovna for two years. She achieved something, expanded, but Helsingfors remained in the hands of Finland. We knew that Catherine II waged war for two years and did not achieve anything special ... We knew all this stuff and believed that **the war with Finland might last until August or September 1940 ...** The war ended after 3 months and 12 days only because our the army did a good job ... " Finally, the final chords of*

Stalin's speech thundered in a genuine triumphal march:

*"... Our army has become strong with both feet on the rails of a new, real Soviet modern army ...*

*The question is, who did we defeat? They say Finns. Well, of course, the Finns won. But this is not the most important thing in this war. Defeating the Finns is not God knows what task. Of course, we had to defeat the Finns. We defeated not only the Finns, we also defeated their European teachers - we defeated the German defensive equipment, we defeated the English defensive equipment, we defeated the French defensive equipment. Not only the Finns were defeated, but also the equipment of the advanced states of Europe. Not only the technique of the advanced states of Europe, we defeated their tactics, their strategy ... We defeated the technique, tactics and strategy of the advanced states of Europe, whose representatives were teachers of the Finns. This is our main victory!* (Stormy applause, everyone stands up, shouts of "Hurrah!". Shouts of "Hurrah for Comrade Stalin!" The participants in the meeting give a stormy ovation in honor of Comrade Stalin.)

**KULIK.** *I think,*

*comrades, that each of us in our souls, in our blood, in our Bolshevik consciousness will bear those words of our great leader, Comrade Stalin, which he uttered from this rostrum. Each of us must follow the instructions of Comrade Stalin. Hurrah, comrades!* (Exclamations of "Hurrah!".)

It is not difficult to understand the enthusiasm of those present, for they (the Conference participants) understood the most important thing: the Master is pleased. The father forgave his mischievous sons, and he will not punish anyone this time. And he could punish. Everyone knew this, and not more than a year and a half later, at the end of their short life path, many participants in the historic Conference could be convinced of this. In June-July 1941, Klich, Oborin, Pavlov, Proskurov, Ptukhin, Rychagov, Stern will be arrested and then shot. Kulik would be arrested and shot later, on August 24, 1950 (and not for real sins - the failure of all the operations entrusted to him, looting in the combat zone and "domestic decay", but because in drunken conversations Comrade Kulik allowed himself completely different, than at the April Meeting, statements about the great leader Comrade Stalin) [47, 48].

But all this will come later. Then, in the spring of 1940, a waterfall of awards, new ranks and new appointments fell on the Red Army, and above all on its command staff. It was after the end of the Finnish war, on June 4, 1940, that general ranks were introduced. Central newspapers for several weeks in a row printed long lists of 949 newly minted generals. The highest award of the country - the title of Hero of the Soviet Union - was awarded to 412 people (four times more than will be awarded for the courage shown in the battle for Moscow). Orders and medals were awarded to 50,000 soldiers and commanders; 70 units and formations were awarded the Orders of Lenin and the Red Banner [66, 81]. Almost all the participants in

the April Meeting have risen through the ranks. Divisional commander Gorelenko in the "winter war" commanded the 50th rifle corps. He met the Great Patriotic War as commander of the 7th Army. The commander of the 100th Infantry Division, Brigade Commander Ermakov, became the commander of the 50th Army. The commander of the 1st Rifle Corps, Divisional Commander Kozlov, became commander of the Transcaucasian Military District. The commander of the 39th tank brigade, brigade commander Lelyushenko, became the commander of the 21st mechanized corps. The 2nd mechanized corps was headed by the former commander of the 8th rifle division brigade commander Novoselsky. Commander o

brigade commander Pshennikov became commander of the 23rd Army. The chief of artillery of the 7th Army, commander Parsegov, became the commander of the artillery of the largest Kyiv Special Military District (KOVO) in the country. Commander of the Air Force of the 9th Army, Commander Rychagov, at the age of 29, became the head of the Red Army Air

Force Directorate and Deputy People's Commissar of Defense. The commander of the 70th Infantry Division had to go through the most dizzying takeoff. In June 1940, the former division commander Kirponos commanded the troops of the entire Leningrad Military District, and from February 1941, already in the rank of colonel general, he became commander of the KOVO. Under the command of the former division commander (before that, the head of an infantry school in provincial Kazan), there was a grouping of troops that significantly exceeded the ground army of Great Britain or the United States in numbers ... Even the commander of the 15th Army, Kovalev, although he had to hear a lot of strong words from Stalin at the Meeting, was sent to an honorable and rather comfortable exile - to the post of commander of the Trans-Baikal Front.

The first, main and, in fact, the only argument in favor of the version about that Stalin was allegedly very dissatisfied with the actions of the Red Army is the fact of a change in the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense (May 1940), and then the General Staff (August 1940). At the same time, another fact is strangely ignored - the most important "heroes" of the Finnish war were appointed to the places vacated after the resignation of Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov. S.K. became People's Commissar of Defense. Timoshenko, who occupied from January 7 to March 26, 1940 the post of commander of the troops of the North-Western Front. The former commander of the LenVO and the 7th Army K.A. became the Chief of the General Staff. Meretskov, i.e. it was the same commander who from the very beginning directed the operational planning of the war and the preparation of

the theater of operations for the offensive. In an equally strange way, another fact fell out of the field of view of historians - where exactly Stalin "kicked out" Voroshilov in the neck. But it's enough to open any completely unclassified biographical directory to find out that after being relieved of his duties as People's Commissar of Defense, Comrade Voroshilov on the same day, still in the same highest military rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union, became chairman of the Defense Committee under the government of the USSR. June 30, 1941 Voroshilov became a member of the State Defense Committee, i.e. among those five people (Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov, Beria), in whose hands all power in the country was formally and legally concentrated. In addition to this, the highest state position, Marshal Voroshilov also received a very high position in the military leadership: on July 10, 1941, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the North-Western Strategic Direction.

Shaposhnikov's resignation was also formally decorative, designed primarily for Western military analysts. Relieving him of his duties as chief of the General Staff, Stalin appointed Shaposhnikov (for whom, according to all memoirists, he had unfailing respect) to the honorary "sinecure" of the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and awarded him the title of Marshal of the Soviet Union. One month and one week after the start of the Great Patriotic War, Marshal Shaposhnikov again became Chief of the General Staff. He died on March 26, 1945 and, by special order of Stalin, was awarded unique honors: in his memory in

Moscow fired a salute of 24 volleys from 124 guns. It is unlikely that all this can be called "disgrace" and "exile" ...

So why didn't Stalin bring the invasion of Finland to its logical and expected conclusion?  
In search of an answer to

this key question for understanding all subsequent events, let us turn again to Stalin's speech at the Meeting of the highest command staff on April 17, 1940. This is, without exaggeration, an amazing and mysterious text. Deciphering its secret meaning is a little easier than unambiguously interpreting the prophecies of Nostradamus. First of all, frank, undisguised, obvious lies are striking (which Comrade Stalin had not seen before). Who did Stalin want to deceive, telling his future generals that he did not plan to "squeeze Finland"? the purpose of the operation was allegedly just "reconnaissance with a bayonet" and the capture of bridgeheads, to which some "main forces" still had to be brought up, that they were going to fight until September 1940? It would be nice if he spoke at the field camp in front of the collective farmers (true, Stalin never went to collective farms, as well as to factories with factories ...), but the participants in the Meeting did not just know about the real plan of the Finnish campaign. They developed it. It was they who drew red arrows on the maps, measured the kilometers of routes with a compass, calculated the required number of "daily food supplies for personnel and horsemen". In the plans that they developed and which then returned to them in the form of orders and directives binding on them, **the purpose of the operation, its timing and boundaries were quite specifically indicated.**

Goal: *"inflict a decisive defeat on the Finnish army ... defeat the main grouping of enemy troops ... capture the Finnish fleet and prevent it from leaving for neutral waters ... destroy enemy aircraft and airfield facilities ..."* Frontiers: *"take control of the area of Khiitola, Imatra, Viipuri (Vyborg).*

*Upon completion of this task, be ready for further actions inland according to the situation ... Break the Finnish cleanliness in the area of Suoyarvi, Sortavala, take possession of their fortified strip between the lake. Janis-Jarvi and Lake Ladoga ... Having mastered the area of Kemi, Oulu (Uleaborg), cut off communication between Finland and Sweden across the land border ... "Terms: "conducting an operation in the Vidlitsky direction within 15 days, on*

*Karperesheyka 8–10 days with an average advance of troops of 10–12 km per day" [97].*

All this can be summed up in one short word: destruction. The complete defeat of the armed forces of Finland was planned, and in a very short time. There was no talk of any "reconnaissance in force", or of any "thrown of the White Finns from the walls of the city of Lenin". Yes, and it would be strange to deploy 58 divisions just to reconnoiter the "position of forces and defenses" of the Finnish army, which in peacetime consisted of three divisions and one brigade ... As for "further actions inland", the meaning, purpose and the content of these future actions were brought to the attention not only of the highest command staff of the Red Army, but also of all workers and collective farmers of the Land of Soviets. *"The Soviet government does not recognize the so-called "Finnish government", which has already left the city of Helsinki and headed in an unknown direction* (this deliberate lie was not new - Comrade Molotov simply duplicated the wording that he used on September 17

1939 to justify the invasion and subsequent occupation of Eastern Poland). *The Soviet government recognizes only the People's Government of the Democratic Republic of Finland, with which it has concluded a Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship.* This

remarkably clear answer by Comrade Molotov, at the request of the Swedish envoy Mr. Winter, was published on December 5, 1939 on the front page of Pravda and theoretically should have been studied in every work collective. And if the so-called "people's government" no longer appeared on the pages of the Pravda newspaper, then in secret documents it continued to live its ghostly life for a long time. For example, on February 23, 1940, a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, comrade. Kuusinen sends greetings from Moscow to Moscow, to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on behalf of the "People's Government of Democratic Finland." In it, he expresses his firm conviction that *"with the help of the glorious Red Army and the Navy of the USSR, our people will soon achieve their complete liberation from the barbaric yoke of the plutocratic Mannerheim-Ryuti-Tanner gang, criminal provocateurs of war, bribed by foreign imperialists"* [ 79]. The most important thing in this document is the date. Two weeks before the "barbarian leader of the plutocratic gang", i.e. Finnish Prime Minister Risto Ryti, arrived in Moscow to sign a peace treaty,

comrade. Kuusinen still hoped for a "soon and complete release". The generally accepted, well-established answer in the historical literature to all these question marks, as well as to the main question posed in the title of this chapter, is known. Stalin was in fact extremely worried, if not "scared" - but not by the huge losses and meager successes of his army, but by the plans and actions of the Anglo-French bloc. **It was precisely this - the fear of being drawn into a war with a united coalition of "advanced states of Europe" - that led Stalin to the decision not to tempt fate and stop the march on Helsinki** halfway (in the literal and figurative sense of the word).

*"Moscow's decision to stop the war was explained primarily by fears of intervention in the conflict by Great Britain and France"* [14]. *"In the face of a sharply increased threat of intervention in the war by England and France, the Soviet leadership was forced to negotiate and conclude peace with the legitimate Finnish authorities"* [34]. *"Perhaps, signs of support for the Finns by England and France were the main factor that prompted the Soviet Union to change its position"* [51]. *"The continuation of hostilities until a complete military victory over Finland led to the inevitable armed intervention in the war of the Western powers. As a result, on March 6, the Soviet leadership announces its readiness to start peace talks with Finland in Moscow"* [52].

*"In order to avoid threatening complications with the Western powers, the Soviet leadership had to put aside its goals in relation to Finland and be content for the time being with the annexation of large territories in Karelia"* [65]. The same thing - albeit in the completely enchanting language of Bolshevik propaganda - was also said in a secret directive letter from the Executive Committee of the *Comintern* dated March 18, 1940: ... " [82]. It is noteworthy that even in the censored memoirs of K.A. Meretskov (edition 1984) quotes the following words of Stalin, said by him in

in a telephone conversation with Meretskov on March 10, 1940: *"The prolongation of the war will allow the French and Swedes to send reinforcements, and instead of a war with one state, we will get involved in a war with a coalition"* [93].

Strictly speaking, there is no direct documentary evidence of this version. Most likely, they will never be discovered: Stalin did not trust his innermost thoughts to paper, or even to the ears of his closest associates. Above, we have already examined in detail how he talked with the highest command staff of his army. The top party officials were also completely unaware of many of Stalin's real plans. *"What specific territorial claims were put forward, what political demands, what kind of relationship should have developed, I don't remember now, but apparently some conditions were put forward so that Finland became a friendly country. This goal was pursued, but how it was expressed, how it was formulated, I do not know. I haven't even read or seen these documents."* These are not memoirs of a collective farm chairman from the Russian hinterland. This is a fragment from the famous "Memoirs" of N.S. Khrushchev, at that time a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the first secretary of the Central Committee of the largest Ukrainian Republican Communist Party in the USSR. Nevertheless, a lot of circumstantial evidence allows us to assume with a high degree of probability that the unexpected (and this is how it was perceived throughout the world) cessation of the war can only be explained by Stalin's reaction to the changed foreign policy situation.

In a certain sense, the incantations with which Stalin ended his speech on April 17, 1940 can be considered such "indirect evidence" (*"... the German defensive equipment was defeated, the English defensive equipment was defeated, the French defensive equipment was defeated. Not only the Finns were defeated, but also the equipment advanced states of Europe. Not only the technique of the advanced states of Europe, we defeated their tactics, their strategy ... "*). Knowing full well that he did not defeat anyone, moreover, he was even afraid to enter into direct conflict with the West, Stalin probably tried to console himself and his enchanted listeners in this way. No less indicative is the eloquent reservation that Stalin made in his speech (*"when is the issue of Leningrad to be decided, if not in such conditions, when their hands are occupied, we see a favorable situation in order to hit them at that moment"*). Of course, Stalin wanted to say only about the favorable opportunity to strike at Finland, which arose at the moment when "they" (that is, the Anglo-French bloc) "hands were busy" with the war against Germany. But resentment and hidden hatred "for them" (i.e., for his future allies, from whom in the autumn of 1941 he would beg not only weapons, but also soldiers to protect his crumbling empire) spilled out of the subconscious outward in this small

the word "them".

Incomparably more significant is the story of Petsamo (Pechenga). This polar city and ice-free port on the Barents Sea, at the junction of the borders of Norway, Finland and the USSR, was of great economic (the largest nickel mines in Europe) and military-strategic (the northern "sea gates" of Finland) importance. Petsamo was occupied by the troops of the 14th Army in the very first days of the war. Then the offensive of the 14th Army deep into Finland continued successfully, despite the most difficult natural conditions: the polar night, snowstorm and terrible frosts, reaching up to 50 degrees on some days. By the end of the war, the 52nd Rifle Division reached the 150th

kilometers on the Petsamo-Rovaniemi highway. All these achievements were brought to naught when, under the terms of the peace treaty of March 12, 1940, Petsamo was returned to Finland. The situation becomes even more surprising if we compare it with how the territorial issue was resolved in Ladoga Karelia and on the Karelian Isthmus: **in all sections, the border line ran significantly (sometimes for many tens of kilometers) north and northwest of the front line that had developed as of March 12, 1940.** In particular, Kexholm, Antrea, Hiitola, Sortavala, Loimola, Suoyarvi (these names will be found many more times on the pages of our book) passed to the Soviet Union precisely under the terms of the Moscow Treaty, and were not captured at all in battle. The only reasonable explanation for that single case, when

in one single point the USSR did not take additionally, but, on the contrary, gave away part of what was captured, is that. that the concession for the Petsamo nickel mines belonged to a British (more precisely, Canadian) firm. Thus, the annexation of Petsamo would mean a direct armed seizure of the property of the British Empire, which Stalin did not dare to do. It should also be noted that from the very beginning of the war, one of the three divisions of the 14th Army (14th Rifle) did not participate in hostilities against the "White Finns", but was (with the exception of the 95th Rifle Regiment) deployed on the coast of the Kola peninsulas. having the task of repelling a possible amphibious landing by the Western Allies [33]. A vivid illustration of the anxiety and uncertainty in which Stalin was in the

early spring of 1940 can be the following report by the ambassador of Nazi Germany to the USSR, Count Schulenburg, sent from Moscow to Berlin on April 11, 1940: "For some time we observed a clearly *unfavorable in relation to us, a change on the part of the Soviet government. We unexpectedly ran into difficulties, which in many cases were completely unfounded, in all areas ... The Soviet government suddenly took back the promises it had already made regarding the "Nord base", in which our navy was interested, etc. These obstacles culminated in the temporary suspension of our oil and grain supplies. On the 5th of this month, I had a long conversation with Mr. Mikoyan, during which the position of the People's Commissar was extremely unfriendly ... We asked ourselves in vain what the possible reason for the unexpected change in the position of the Soviet authorities was. I suspected that the incredible noise raised by our opponents (in this case,*

*undoubtedly, they meant England and France. - M.S.), their sharp attacks on neutrals, especially the Soviet Union, and on neutrality did not turn out to be ineffectual at all. because the Soviet government is afraid of being drawn by the Entente into a major war (for which it is not ready) and for this reason wants to avoid everything that could serve as a pretext for the British and French to accuse the USSR of acting contrary to neutrality or of ardent support of Germany. It seemed to me that **the unexpected end of the Finnish war** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) happened for the same reasons ... The situation became so intolerable that I decided to turn to Mr. Molotov in order to discuss these issues with him ... In fact, a visit to Mr. Molotov did not take place until the morning of April 9, i.e. took place*

*already after our Scandinavian operations (meaning the beginning of Operation Weserübung, during which Denmark and Norway were occupied. - M.S.).*

*During this conversation, it became apparent that the Soviet government had once again made a complete reversal. The unexpected suspension of the supply of oil and grain was called "excessive zeal of subordinate authorities", which will be immediately canceled ... Mr. Molotov was courtesy itself. he readily listened to all our complaints and promised to rectify the situation. On his own initiative, he raised a number of questions of interest to us and announced their resolution in a positive sense. I must confess that I was absolutely amazed by this change. From my point of view, there*

*is only one explanation for this turn of events: our Scandinavian operations should have brought great relief to the Soviet government, removed, so to speak, a huge burden of anxiety ... If the British and French intended to occupy Norway and Sweden, then we can definitely assume that the Soviet the government was aware of these plans and was apparently intimidated by them. The Soviet government imagined the appearance of the British and French on the coast of the Baltic Sea, it saw that the Finnish question would be reopened. Finally, they were most frightened by the danger of being drawn into a war with two great powers. Obviously, this fear has been weakened by us. Only this can explain the complete change in the position of Herr Molotov. Today's large and conspicuous article in Izvestia about our Scandinavian campaign seems like one deep sigh of relief . This phrase about a "deep sigh of relief" gives the key to understanding the surprising at*

*first glance complacency in which Comrade. Stalin held a meeting with his military leaders. The meeting began on April 14, 1940, five days after the outbreak of hostilities in Norway, and on the very day that the Western Allies achieved major successes in Narvik and Trondheim. The war on land and at sea became more and more fierce, and in this situation there was no longer any doubt that the West had completely forgotten about the previous plans to "save Finland" (more precisely, save its own reputation, which was pretty tarnished by a cowardly three-month inaction) . You don't have to be a psychic to understand what thought took possession of Comrade Stalin's mind at that moment. "Swept through" - it was this joyful feeling that became the leitmotif of his speech at the meeting. Unwittingly, Hitler not only saved Stalin from the anxious expectation of the landing of the Anglo-French Expeditionary Force in northern Finland, but also saved Stalin's generals from the wrath of the owner.*



## Chapter

### 1.5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Finland as such did not occupy much space either in the thoughts of Stalin or in the operational plans of the General Staff of the Red Army. (Shaposhnikov: *"The Finnish theater of military operations in our general operational plan occupied a secondary position in a certain political situation, completely different from what it received during the ongoing hostilities."* Report of the Commission of the General Staff of the USSR Navy: *"The main line of combat training of the fleet was in the direction of preparing for a war with an enemy with a large fleet, but they were not specifically preparing for a war with Finland."* Voroshilov: *"Poland, Romania and all sorts of the Baltic states, they have already been removed from our accounts a long time ago, we are these gentlemen at any time under all circumstances, we will grind to powder."*) The Great Game, which Stalin began in the summer of 1939, was supposed to lead to the establishment of Soviet hegemony not in sparsely populated Finland, but over most of the European continent. At the beginning of the Game, Stalin made a brilliant move. It will be difficult to find in his long political life an example of another, equally large-scale, quick and stunning success, which was the alliance with Hitler, established in August-September 1939. With one short blow, Stalin mixed up all the figures on the pan-European (and on the global) field and left the Anglo-French bloc (whose leaders had already given Poland official guarantees of military assistance!) face-to-face with the Berlin paranoid, who, after the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, fell into that state that corresponds to the Russian proverb "the drunken sea is knee-deep." European war became inevitable, and it began exactly one week after the signing of the pact.

Just in exchange for Stalin's non-intervention in the war (and very limited, more ritual than actual military assistance), Hitler gave him 50.4% of the territory of Poland (for the defeat of which the German Wehrmacht paid 16 thousand soldiers with their lives), gave Stalin complete freedom of hands in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia and Finland, allowed free access for Stalin's "engineers" to the most important military-industrial enterprises in Germany, in exchange for raw ore and flax he sold the latest models of combat aircraft, tanks, guns, ships, radio stations ... In euphoria From his first successes, Hitler did not have time to notice that Stalin - in full accordance with the precepts of his great teacher - supports him, like "a rope supports a hanged man" (V.I. Lenin, PSS, vol. 41, p. 73). Only by the summer of 1940 did Hitler finally realize the simple fact that he had given Stalin not even one, but three "knife switches" capable of "turning off" the German economy. One of them was in the oil fields of Romania, which, after the Red Army reached

the line of the Prut River, were within reach of even the lightest single-engine bombers. The second was Swedish iron ore and Finnish nickel, the supply of which, after the establishment of Soviet control over Finland, would have been entirely dependent on the goodwill of Stalin. The third "switch" was the endless steel belt of the Trans-Siberian, along which to Germany

there was a transit flow of rubber, tungsten, soybeans from the countries of Southeast Asia. Without these most important sources of raw materials, the German war machine could last half a year, at most a year. Alas,

the grandiose and very "cheap", bloodless success turned Comrade Stalin's head. (Khrushchev: *"He literally walked around like a gogol, his nose up, and literally said: "He fooled Hitler! He fooled Hitler!"* ") When planning the annexation of the Baltic states, Stalin simply did not think that one of the countries placed at his disposal would behave not like an object but as a full-fledged, animated subject of world politics. The stubborn unwillingness to bend, shown by the leadership of Finland, caused him both surprise and extreme irritation. All questions - according to Stalin - had already been resolved. The big bosses have already agreed on everything. Who cares to listen to the opinion of the Finnish government? Who allowed him to have any "opinion" about what Hitler and Stalin had already decided between themselves? And what kind of government is that anyway? Political gamblers. Pea jokes. Finland goat. Insignificant flea ... Surrendering to

the power of negative emotions, Stalin began to make one mistake after another. Why put on this whole stupid spectacle with the "Kuusinen government"? Why was it necessary to publicly call an armed enemy a "flea" and a "boat"? Why was it necessary to shout about the "red banner over the presidential palace in Helsinki." BEFORE the Red Army entered Helsinki? Why was it necessary to drive yourself into a situation from which it was impossible to get out without losing prestige? Why did 230,000 shells a day begin to fall on Finnish fortifications in the last, and not in the first days of the war? Why did the Red Army begin hostilities with only one third of the forces that were concentrated in the Finnish theater at the end of the war?

Unfortunately, there are specific answers to all these questions. Unfortunately, because the same mistake was repeated by Stalin - only with immeasurably more severe, catastrophic consequences - in the summer of 1941. **Stalin did not take into account what in his era was called "consciousness", and today - the "human factor"**. Assessing the balance of forces of the opposing sides, Stalin counted divisions, guns, tanks, aircraft. All this he had a lot, a lot, ten times more than in stubborn Finland. What doubts could there be about the inevitable and imminent victory? And none of the crowd of stupid people and sycophants with whom he surrounded himself had the courage to tell the Boss that one regiment of Finnish reservists, ready to die in order not to live under the rule of Stalin, in battle would cost more than two regular divisions of the Red Army. recruited from collective farm slaves. Moreover, Stalin was assured in unison that his subjects *"as one person are gladly ready to give their lives for the great cause of Lenin-Stalin, and in the name of this ideology, fighters, commanders and political workers are always ready to give their lives"* ( Voroshilov, speech on 18 th Congress of the CPSU (b)). However, what do we want from Voroshilov, if today, almost seventy years later, when discussing the reasons for the unsuccessful debut of the Red Army in the Finnish war, many Russian historians continue to chew on the old washcloth about "severe frost", "stretched communications", "indestructible pillboxes of the line Mannerheim"...

Comrade Stalin never publicly acknowledged his mistakes, but he almost always quickly realized and corrected them with unshakable perseverance. He assessed the failure of the December offensive quite adequately; according to reality. Without

comforting self-deception, but also without panic. And why would he panic? 18 thousand dead and missing? The trouble is not great - in the summer of 1938, at the height of the great terror, 5 thousand people were shot in one day. And nothing. The women gave birth to new ones. Two divisions against one Finnish regiment May? And this can be solved - we will send 12 divisions. And we still have. There were shells, there were cannons, there were divisions, which means that the final defeat of the Finnish

army was just a matter of time. But

Stalin did not have enough time. Stalin took the danger of military intervention by the Anglo-French bloc very seriously - and this was also quite adequate to reality. The threat was too great to simply ignore. There is, of course, no "150,000th expeditionary corps" that Soviet historians and propagandists used to frighten gullible people for decades, was not in sight. After all the endless meetings, meetings, discussions and statements, the allies (England and France) firmly and specifically promised Mannerheim that by the end of March (!!!) the "first echelon" would arrive in Finland, consisting of three brigades and several separate battalions with a total strength of 15, 5 thousand people. As a consolation, they added that *"these will be selected troops,"* and after the first echelon to Finland (if it still exists by then) the second echelon, consisting - scary to say - of three British divisions, will arrive. Of course, these are not at all the forces with which it was possible to radically change the balance of forces in the Finnish theater of operations, or at least embarrass Stalin. **His fears were related to the fact that the Allies would take advantage of the situation in order to wriggle out of the war with Germany.** (*"They are fighting there, but the war is somehow weak, either they are fighting, or they are playing cards. Suddenly they will take it and make peace, which is not excluded."*) Such a

*development of events was quite probable, and it threatened to ruin the whole* **Stalin's strategic plan to use the European war for his own purposes.** Prior to that, he, like the wise monkey from a Chinese parable, "sat on a mountain, watching the fight between two tigers." In this comfortable position, the Soviet leaders would like to continue to sit. (*"If these gentlemen already have such an irrepressible desire to fight, let them fight on their own, without the help of the Soviet Union. (Laughter. Applause.) We would see what kind of warriors they are."* Molotov, speech at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 31, 1939 .) Now, in the conditions of the protracted war with Finland, not only did everyone see what "warriors" were sitting in the Kremlin, but also Messrs. Daladier and Chamberlain (who, as you know, never had an "irrepressible desire" to fight against Hitler) received a perfect excuse to turn the guns the other way. In the

situation created by the beginning of 1940, it would have been both easy and profitable for them to do this. It is easy, because the League of Nations has already adopted the relevant resolutions, in which the actions of the Soviet Union were called "aggression", and all members of the League of Nations were called upon to help the victim of aggression. Thus, an undeniable legal basis for armed intervention in the war on the side of Finland was created. In addition, Comrade Molotov, the "irrespectively zealous" comrade, with his completely unbridled speeches, publicly exposed (and even more significantly exaggerated) the role of the USSR as a de facto ally of Nazi Germany. And this made it possible to present to the whole world any anti-Soviet actions (in

including the planned air strikes on the oil fields of Baku) as an attack on the "logistic supply base" of the Nazi Reich. The exceptional advantage of the situation was that after landing in the north of Norway, the Anglo-French expeditionary force simply could not pass to Finland otherwise than through the region of the Swedish iron mines of Gällivare-Kiruna. Allied command documents declassified after the war unequivocally indicate that they were much more interested in establishing control over Swedish mines and ice-free ports in Norway than the noble mission of "saving Finland" [65]. How would Germany behave if the armed conflict between the USSR and the Anglo-French bloc

became a reality? One can only guess about this. But there is no reason to doubt for a moment how he assessed the possible development

Stalin himself. *"We must remember the most important thing - the philosophy of Lenin. It has not been surpassed, and it would be good if our Bolsheviks learned this philosophy."* And in accordance with this "unsurpassed philosophy", the international bourgeoisie at any moment had to put aside all their internal differences and unite to fight against the world's first "proletarian state". The obsessive idea that "they will suddenly take it and make peace" like a nightmare haunted Stalin throughout the world war. Even after Churchill and Roosevelt - in complete contradiction to the whole "philosophy of Lenin" - rushed to save him from the trap into which he drove himself, Stalin's manic suspicion did not decrease. Then, in the winter of 1940, Stalin assessed the situation in the most gloomy terms: *"We knew that the Finns were supported by France. England, surreptitiously supported by the Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, supported by America, supported by Canada. We know well. It is necessary to foresee every possibility in a war, especially not to lose sight of the worst possibilities.* The worst possibility was that because of the "insignificant flea" the wise monkey would have to descend from the mountain and fight with one of the tigers, and maybe with two tigers at the same time ... Let's pay tribute to Comrade Stalin - choosing between the interests of

the case and personal prestige, he chose the interests of the cause at that time. The first proposal about the readiness of the Soviet leadership to throw out the "Kuusinen government" as unnecessary and conclude a peace treaty with the legitimate authorities of Finland was received in Helsinki on January 30, 1940. *limited to those put forward during the negotiations with Messrs. Paasikivi and Tanner in Moscow, since after these negotiations blood was shed on both sides...*" [22, 23]. In any case, this diplomatic demarche testified to Stalin's readiness to end the war even before achieving at least minimal military successes that could allow the great power to "save face." Alas, the dangerous disease that Comrade Stalin called "dizziness from success" was widespread not only in Moscow, but also in Helsinki. In the answer given by the Finnish government on February 2, 1940, there was more resentment and pride (humanly understandable) than common

sense. *("The Government of Finland did not start and did not want war ... Finland was satisfied with its former*

*a position based on freely concluded agreements, and Finland did not demand anything for itself ... The Government of Finland believes that the transfer of territories can be carried out only through an exchange."*) [ 22, 23]. In fact, Stalin was offered to admit his complete military defeat and return to the starting point with nothing. Unless with the consent of Finland to the exchange of some territories. And no more.

Even such statements of the "Finnish booger" Stalin considered for nine whole days (!), Before on February 11, the protracted lull at the front was blown up by the roar of artillery cannonade, which announced the beginning of the general offensive of the Red Army on the Karelian Isthmus. Probably, Stalin's decision to make a second attempt at a quick military solution to the issue was also influenced by the information coming through diplomatic and intelligence channels, indicating that the Anglo-French command is not going to go further than empty talk and writing regular "plans". A month later, at the beginning of March 1940, two interconnected facts were clearly understood in Moscow: the defeat of the Finnish army was inevitable, but it would not be possible to achieve it quickly. Despite the concentration of huge forces, the rapid forced march along the Vyborg-Helsinki route did not take place. The Red Army was advancing, but with huge losses, meter by meter painfully "gnawing through" the Finnish defenses. The approaching spring thaw threatened to further reduce the pace of the offensive, as among the melted swamps and lakes (the ice shell of which was used as a runway for operational airfields), the Red Army was losing its key advantage in tanks and heavy artillery.

On the other hand, the threat of intervention in the conflict by the Western powers has already taken on absolutely concrete outlines: on March 13, the Germans discovered British submarines near the Baltic Straits [65], several slow-moving transports with Allied troops had already put to sea [95]. *The "worst opportunity"* was beginning to materialize, and the peace treaty in Moscow was concluded just a few days before the possible landing of the Anglo-French expeditionary force in Scandinavia. Summing up

the results of the "winter war" in his memoirs, Marshal Mannerheim writes: *"The reasons that the Soviet Union - at least temporarily - decided to abandon its original plans, were primarily of a military nature ... There was no lightning success ... In addition, a whole series of political complications. The most important of these was the threat of intervention by Western countries, which could destroy the relations of the USSR with France and England. It was also*

*unprofitable for the Kremlin that his hands **were tied in the north at the very moment when he faced new tasks** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), provided for by the Soviet-German pact: the occupation of Bessarabia and the Bolshevization of the Baltic countries ... "* [22]. The last remark - about

the plans for the occupation of Bessarabia, which plans could be frustrated by the Finnish war that dragged on beyond measure - deserves to dwell on this issue in a little more detail.

At the level of "popular rumor" they expected a war against Romania, and they waited precisely in the spring of 1940. These expectations are clearly recorded in the reports of the Special Departments of the Leningrad Military District as typical examples

"unhealthy moods" that take place among some military personnel. In particular, rumors connected the sudden cessation of the Finnish war with the need to transfer troops to the "Romanian front". It would be possible not to pay much attention to this "soldier's truth" - every war gives rise to its own stable myths - if the most high-ranking commanders did not blurt out the same thing. Here, for example, the head of the

Main Armored Directorate of the Red Army, General Pavlov, shares his thoughts with the participants of the April (1940) meeting: *"In order to correct the mistakes of the past, I sat down to study the military geographical description of the southern theater, if we go, or maybe we will have to go to Romania ... "*

And here is the opinion expressed at the same meeting by the chief of the General Staff of the Red Army himself: *"Comrade. Stalin rightly said that in all states you will come across such a wall that the Finns built for so long and which we had to take ... This is the first thing we will encounter in one way or another on the border. Probably, the Romanians are fencing something, and the Turks, I don't know about Afghanistan, but Iran is trying to*

*buy cement ... "* And a completely amazing (surprising in that it was not destroyed, but declassified) document was preserved in the depths of the Russian State Military Archive. On March 5, 1940, Deputy Head of the Special Department of the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD of the USSR, Major of State Security Osetrov, wrote a memorandum to People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov: *"On January 31, Commander of the Siberian Military District, Commander of the 2nd Rank Kalinin made a report on the international situation in the District House of the Red Army ... Kalinin announced the inevitability of a big war in the spring of 1940, in which, on the one hand, the USSR would stand in a bloc with Germany, Japan and Italy (nice company. - M.S.) against the Anglo-French bloc. Romania will be the instigator of this big war... but Romania at the very beginning of the conflict will be hit from three directions, i.e. from the USSR, Germany and Bulgaria (Voroshilov underlined this phrase with a red pencil. - M.S.), after which Turkey, Iran, England, France will enter the war. Italy and possibly the USA. The war with Romania will end very quickly, but hostilities with England. France and their allies will be protracted..." [83].* I wonder what excited

Voroshilov in the phrase he underlined? A beautiful operational idea that can be reported to the owner on occasion, or an unacceptable leak of the most important information that Commander 2nd Rank Kalinin should not have known either ... The most interesting thing, as

expected, is found in the last lines of the memorandum, where the deputy "chief special officer" of the Red Army draws his conclusions: *"Many commanders consider the speech of comrade. Kalinin is confused and the coverage of the international situation in this form is politically harmful.* Why such vagueness and caution in the assessment? Since when did the special officers hide behind the "opinion of many commanders"? And this is after the NKVD successfully imprisoned and shot many thousands of Red Army commanders ... Most likely, on March 5, 1940, Comrade. Osetrov himself did not yet know how it was now necessary to "cover the international situation", with whom and against whom the Soviet Union would fight, but just in case, he decided to inform Voroshilov about Kalinin's report so that

to absolve yourself of all responsibility. Judging by the consequences - June 4, 1940 S.A. Kalinin receives the rank of lieutenant general and continues to safely command his district - a report with statements about an imminent war against Romania, and even in alliance with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, was not assessed as "a malicious slander on the invariably peaceful foreign policy of the USSR" ( S.A. Kalinin was arrested much later, on June 24 , 1944, because he *"expressed doubts about the correctness of the conduct of the war, accusing the Supreme High Command of allowing heavy losses in certain operations."* after Stalin's death, July 13, 1953) [84].

The southern direction of possible hostilities was by no means limited to Romania alone. It should be noted that in April 1940 (that is, immediately after the end of the Finnish war) , **6** additional aviation regiments were transferred to the Transcaucasian Military District . The version about strengthening the air defense of the Baku region in the face of the aggressive intrigues of British imperialism will have to be immediately discarded, since there was not **a single fighter regiment among these six regiments**. All six were bombers (three DBAPs, two SBAPs and one LBAP) [85]. An even larger-scale relocation of air units took place in May-June 1940. **14 air regiments were relocated to the Odessa Military District (i.e., to the borders of Romania)**, including **10 bomber regiments**, including three DBAPs and two TBAPs [85].

Why were two dozen air regiments (more than one thousand aircraft) relocated to the southwestern borders of the Soviet Union in the spring of 1940? Perhaps part of the answer to this question is contained in directives No. 468200, 468214, which on April 9 and 11, 1940, the head of the Main Directorate of the Air Force K.A. Smushkevich sent the commanders of the Air Force of the Transcaucasian and Odessa military districts. These documents set the task of *"starting to study the Middle East theater of operations, paying special attention to the following objects ..."* Then followed a list of 22 geographical points, including Alexandria, Beirut, Haifa, Nicosia, Istanbul, Ankara, the Suez Canal, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles [147 ]. In an atmosphere of the strictest secrecy, it was ordered to conduct training flights with training bombing over the territory of the USSR with a range and navigation conditions corresponding to the conditions of the Middle East theater of operations. Through the Soviet military attache in Berlin, it was supposed to request intelligence from the Germans on the British air force base in Mosul ... The command of the Black Sea Fleet

Air Force did not lag behind the ground aviators. In the "Note of the Commander of the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet on the plan of operations of the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet" (not

earlier than March 27, 1940) we read: *"Probable enemy: England, France, Romania, Turkey ... Air Force tasks: to strike ships in the waters of the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus, laying minefields in the Bosphorus..."* [139]. Report of the Commander of the Air Force of the Black Sea Fleet to the Main Navy

Aviation of the Black Sea Fleet for 1940-1941. assumed the following steps:

*"... The tasks of aviation in theaters of military operations: 1. The Black Sea. Delivering powerful bombing attacks on bases: Constanta, Izmail, Varna ... 2. Aegean Sea: Thessaloniki, Smyrna ...*

3. *Mediterranean Sea: Alexandria, Haifa, Suez Canal, about. Malta, Brindisi... By systematic strikes on the Suez Canal, to deprive England and the Mediterranean states of the possibility of normal operation of this communication...*" [140].

It is noteworthy that at the same time, the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army transferred to the main headquarters of the Red Army Air Force for review a list of secret literature published by the Intelligence Industry in late 1939 - early 1940. This list includes, among other things:

- nine reports on the Near, Middle and Far East; - A guide to the Air Force of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan; - description of oil refining facilities in Iraq; - a list of military-industrial facilities in Romania; - a guide to the Romanian Air Force [86]. And

the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force itself also did not sit idle and prepared a 19-page document entitled: "*Description of routes in India No. 1 (Barochil, Chitral passes) and No. 4 (Killio, Gilchit, Srinagor passes)*" [87]. A list of military-industrial facilities in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq was compiled on 34 pages. Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and India [89]. One should not think that only

aviation commanders were going to reach (fly) to the Ganges, or at least to Palestine. On May 11, 1940, Divisional Commissar Shabalin wrote a memorandum to the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army, Mekhlis, in which he wrote with great concern about "*the need to carefully review the organization of units and formations of the Red Army from the point of view of their readiness to wage war in the Middle East theater*" [90]. We also note that exactly 20 days later, on May 31, 1940, Comrade Mekhlis himself signed order No. 0027, in which he set the task "*within a month to equip a workshop with the necessary foreign fonts for the production of literature in the secret printing house of the Military Publishing House*" (probably, there were in the form of leaflets for enemy soldiers and brief phrasebooks. - M.S.). Further in the order there is a long list, which, along with 11 European languages, also names "*Turkish, Iranian, Afghan, Indian* (as in the text. - M.S.), *Chinese, Mongolian, Korean, Japanese*" [91].

As you can see, Mayakovsky was not the only one who loved "the enormity of plans ...". Returning, however, from the problems of "Indian" linguistics to the main topic of this chapter, we can once again state the fact that **the Sovietization of Finland was neither the only nor the main task that faced the Red Army in the spring of 1940.** And when excessive perseverance in solving a particular problem **jeopardized the implementation of the entire grand plan**, Stalin, as a cautious and far-sighted politician, ordered a "reverse move".



## **Part 2**

# **WORLD IS WAR**

## Chapter

### 2.1 PEACE AGREEMENT OR "PEACEBREAK"?

March 29, 1940, speaking at a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the head of the USSR government and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov concluded his report to the "supreme legislative body" regarding the war with Finland with the following words: " *The conclusion of a peace treaty with Finland completes the task set last year to ensure the security of the Soviet Union from the Baltic Sea. This agreement is a necessary addition to the three mutual assistance agreements concluded with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania...*" [101].

No matter who and how one regards Comrade Molotov personally today, one cannot but admit that the task of ensuring security is the first business of any government of any country. For the Soviet Union, the problem of ensuring security "from the side of the Baltic Sea" was more than relevant. On the shore of this sea, on the very edge of the Russian land, was Leningrad: a beautiful city, a center of the military industry, a major railway junction and a seaport; the city is a symbol of the power of the country, its heroic history and centuries-old culture. " *The security of Leningrad is the security of our Fatherland,*" Stalin told his generals and immediately explained why: " *Not only because Leningrad represents 30–35 percent of our country's defense industry, but also because Leningrad is the second capital of our country. Breaking through to Leningrad, occupying it and forming there, say, a bourgeois government, a White Guard one, means providing a fairly serious basis for a civil war within the country against Soviet power*" [20 ].

What results did the 1st Soviet-Finnish war lead to in ensuring the security of Leningrad, and indeed of the entire Soviet Union as a whole? The shortest and most accurate answer to this question can be found in the well-known saying that you cannot jump over an abyss in two jumps. Better not to try. Stalin

seriously wounded Finland - but did not finish it off to the end. This is a very dangerous situation, dangerous when hunting any big game, and a thousand times more dangerous in politics. Moreover, this policy was carried out during the great pan-European war. Before the beginning of the "winter war", the Soviet Union had as its northern neighbor a small state in terms of population, but at the same time a huge state in area. This state had neither the military forces necessary to attack the USSR, nor any significant incentives for such reckless actions. The industrious and reasonable nature of the Finnish people, coupled with the democratic system established in Finland, gave a fairly large guarantee of the stability of this state of affairs. The vast and impenetrable expanses of Finnish forests and lakes were nothing more than a free obstacle course created by nature itself in the path of any aggressor who would try to attack the Soviet Union through the territory of Finland. Finally, the outline of the borders that existed as of November 30, 1939 is the narrow "neck" of the Karelian Isthmus, limited on the western and eastern flanks by water

the spaces of the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga - was equally beneficial for the defense of both Finland and the Soviet Union. The Karelian fortified area, the concrete structures of which began to be built as early as 1928, supported by powerful artillery fire from the forts of Kronstadt and the ships of the Baltic Fleet, could become the same formidable obstacle in the way of the Anglo-French or German troops (if they were in some hypothetical situation, all but it was possible - by war or persuasion - to pass through the territories of Finland), which in real history became the "Mannerheim Line". Now, in the

spring of 1940, the situation has changed radically. Yes, the border line was moved 100–120 km north of Leningrad. But beyond this border lay a country whose people felt insulted, humiliated, robbed and longed for revenge and revenge. This nation retained its statehood, which in this context meant the preservation (if not legal, then actual) of the opportunity to search for helpers and allies in the matter of revenge and revenge. The Finnish state retained its army, the losses of which (about 27 thousand people were killed and missing, 55 thousand were wounded and sick), although they were tragically great for a country with a population of less than 4 million people, they were generally made up for by new draft contingents. As for military equipment and armaments, the paradoxical result of the "winter war" was a significant (multiple in a number of positions) increase in the technical equipment of the Finnish army. This was due to the fact that weapons purchased abroad (or received as gratuitous assistance to the victim of Soviet aggression), for the most part, arrived at the ports of Finland after the hostilities were completed in March 1940. The purely military, operational and tactical results of the "winter war" were no more favorable. Instead of

the 65-kilometer strip of fortifications of the Karelian UR, whose flanks were firmly based on water lines, now it was necessary to defend the as yet unequipped line of the new border, which began on the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland and went into the taiga "infinity". If we talk not about "infinity", but about the specific length of the defense zone of the 23rd Army, which directly covered the "Vyborg and Kexholm directions", then it was 180 km (from Virolahti to Ristalahti). A thousand and one times, Soviet historians lamented the fact that in the summer of 1941 four divisions of the 23rd Army could not hold a 200 km defense line. And this is the absolute truth. According to Soviet pre-war regulations, a rifle division could defend a strip of 8-10-12, but not 45 km. It remains only to remember who and why killed 127 thousand Red Army soldiers in order to move the border line from the fortified area to the boundless forest wilderness. This theory, abstract at first glance, was unambiguously confirmed in practice. In August 1941, a thin "thread" of the defense of the 23rd Army was broken through in a few days, and only after the retreat of the scattered remnants of this army to the line of the "old border" (i.e., the line of concrete fortifications of the Karelian UR) was it finally possible to stop Finnish advance and stabilize the front. Once again, let's pay tribute to Comrade Stalin: he easily and freely deceived others, but he never engaged in the stupid and cowardly act of self-deception. No matter what Stalin's propaganda shouted,

Stalin himself could not fail to understand that

Leningrad's defenses are dangerously weakened. And in this sense, Stalin's firm intention not to stop halfway, but to bring the work begun to its logical conclusion looks quite reasonable. Adequate to the current (largely formed contrary to the plans and intentions of Stalin himself) situation. In the mountains of the Caucasus, where Iosif Dzhugashvili was born, riders say: "Jumped over the fence with your front legs - jump over with your hind legs ..."

There were two, fundamentally different, ways to complete the begun struggle for "strengthening the security of Leningrad" (suppose for a moment that in November 1939 Stalin unleashed a war with Finland precisely for defensive purposes). A great power could offer its offended neighbor to forget old grievances and start living "from scratch". A great power could convince Finland - and not with words, of course, but with practical deeds - that peaceful coexistence and close economic cooperation with the USSR would bring her more benefits than fruitless dreams of military revenge. In short, one could begin to build a line of relations that in the 50s and 60s of the 20th century really turned the Soviet-Finnish border into a "border of peace and friendship". Much more peaceful, we note, than the border with "fraternal socialist China."

But there was another way, the way of preparing for a new war, for a new - and this time already final - solution of the "Finnish question". Which path did Stalin choose? The first answers to this, probably the most important question for the purposes of our study, can already be obtained from an analysis of the terms of the Moscow Peace Treaty of March 1940. The main of these conditions was the definition of a new border line between the USSR and Finland. This line could be drawn based on at least three different considerations (and justifying this decision with three types of arguments). One could

recall the popularly beloved song that thundered from all loudspeakers in those years: "We don't want an inch of alien land." Under this slogan, the victorious Red Army with unfurled banners, to the thunder of orchestras, could return to the border line that existed on November 30, 1939. we don't need good. After all, we didn't start the war for the sake of the Finnish swamps with cranberries, but to protect the city of Lenin, "this is how you could explain this to your people and the international community. However, hardly anyone expected such nobility from Stalin and Co., so let's immediately move on to option No. 2. The new border could be drawn strictly along the line that was proposed to the Finns during the Moscow negotiations in October-

November 1939. And such a decision completely allowed Stalin to get out of the war, as they say, saving face. Everything would be very beautiful: "The will of the mighty Soviet Union is the law for everyone. What we need, we will always take. They didn't want to give it away in a good way, through an exchange of territories - it's worse for you, now you will have to transfer a piece of the territory of the Karelian Isthmus to the Soviet Union in a bad way, after a post-war defeat and without any exchanges.

Finally, the toughest (and the most common in international practice) option No. 3 was also possible. The new border line could be drawn along the front line that had developed at the beginning of March 1940. Based on the simple and ancient "right of conquest." Most likely, in March 1940, the Finnish delegation also counted on such a solution to the territorial issue - as the worst, but, alas, inevitable option. But none of the three listed options suited Stalin. In an

ultimatum form, the Finns were asked to agree to a frankly brazen robbery, in which the Soviet Union appropriated not only all the territories actually occupied by the Red Army, but also those lands that the soldiers of the Soviet army could not even come close to. Under the terms of the Moscow Treaty of March 12, 1940, the entire Karelian and the entire Onega-Ladoga Isthmus, as well as a strip along the northwestern shore of Lake Ladoga, including the Vyborg-Sortavala railway line, departed to the Soviet Union. The new border cut the Saimaa Canal, connecting the port of Vyborg with the Saimaa lake system (before the

war, the main rafting of the Finnish timber went along this wave of the highway). The line of the new frontier was drawn so "cleverly" that the railroad junction at Elisenvaar ended up on Soviet territory (see map no. 2). At the same time, the entire railway system of southeastern Finland was completely torn apart. For example, in order to travel from Imatra to Savonlinna (70 km in a straight line), now it was necessary to make a 350-kilometer "detour" along the route Kouvola, Mikkeli, Pieksämäki. Today, we can only speculate: was such a delineation of the border made out of malice alone, or even then the task was set to make the maneuver of the Finnish army forces as difficult as possible in the zone of the future main attack of the Red Army. The authors of the "peace treaty" did not forget their unfulfilled dreams about how *"when reaching the Swedish border"* they

would *"greet the Swedish army with a salute without entering into negotiations."* Despite the fact that the troops of the 9th Army did not have the slightest success in the Kem direction, under the terms of the Moscow Treaty, the Soviet Union annexed a fair amount of territory (about 5 thousand square kilometers) in northern Karelia, in the Alakurtti-Salla region (see map number 3). Not limited to just one "peaceful breakthrough" into the depths of Finnish territory for 60–65 km, the Stalinist leadership demanded that Finland (Article 7 of the Moscow Treaty) build, *"if possible during 1940"*, a railway connecting the city of Kemijärvi now the border city of Salla. This requirement was justified by the desire of the Soviet Union to carry out *"the transit of goods between the USSR and Sweden along the shortest railway route"* (for which purpose the USSR intended to build the Alakurtti-Salla branch on its "own", i.e. annexed, territory). Indeed, by connecting Kemijärvi and Alakurtti by rail, it was possible to get a direct connection from Kandalaksha to Kemi-Tornio "by the shortest route." At first glance,

everything is quite logical. At a second and more careful glance, it becomes obvious that the polar Kandalaksha can only be an intermediate point on the route of transporting goods from Sweden to the inhabited and industrialized regions of the USSR. To Moscow or Leningrad, the shortest traffic route passes through the southern and central part of Finland (i.e. through Oulu, Kuopio,

Elisenvaara, Kexholm). Transportation along the Murmansk (Kirovskaya) road (i.e. through Kandalaksha, Petrozavodsk, Lodeynoye Pole) does not give any reduction in the way. Having no economic sense, the road to Kemijärvi-Rovaniemi-Kemi, on the other hand, had a completely obvious, undeniable military significance, as a supply line for the Soviet troops advancing from Salla to the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. In order to "ensure

the security of Leningrad", the USSR also annexed the western part of the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas, located at a distance of 1400 km from Leningrad, and also arrogated to itself the right to create a naval and air base on the Khanko Peninsula, located on the northern (Finland) side of the Gulf of Finland, at a distance of 400 km from Leningrad. In general, production amounted to about 37 thousand square meters. km of Finnish land (excluding water spaces) is 13 times more than what Stalin demanded at the negotiations in October 1939, and about 5 times more than what was seized by force of arms during the "winter war".

As for the annexed territories of the Karelian Isthmus and the Ladoga Region, these were among the most economically developed regions of Finland. The pulp and paper mills located there produced about the same amount of pulp as in the rest of the USSR, and of much better quality. 19 large and medium-sized power plants fully provided energy to the entire industry of the region. Moreover, by October 29, 1940, a high-voltage power transmission line was built from the Rouhiala hydroelectric power station on the Vuoksi River to Leningrad, through which 1 million kWh of electricity was injected into the power system of the city on the Neva. Before the war, in the summer of 1939, 12% of the population of Finland lived in this territory and 30% of grain was produced. In terms of the area of cultivated arable land (178 thousand ha), the "newly acquired" areas were 2.7 times larger than the corresponding figure for the entire Soviet Karelia [14, 112].

Noteworthy are also quite remarkable legal aspects of the history of the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty. On March 12, 1940, who, with whom, and on what basis concluded an agreement in Moscow? These are by no means simple questions. Formally and legally, the Soviet Union did not declare war on Finland and was not at war with it. Formally and legally, the relations between the USSR and Finland were based on the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship concluded on December 2, 1939 with the People's Government of the Finnish Democratic Republic. There was no war between the two states. About this head of the government of the USSR comrade. Molotov publicly declared to "the city and the world" on December 4, 1939: *"The Soviet government does not recognize the so-called 'Finnish government', which has already left the city of Helsinki and headed in an unknown direction, and therefore can no longer negotiate with this 'government' stand the question. The Soviet government recognizes only the People's Government of the Finnish Democratic Republic, has concluded a Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship with it, and this is a reliable basis for the development of peaceful and favorable relations between the USSR and Finland . The same irreproachable*

logic was used in the League of Nations, whose General Secretary was told that "the Soviet Union is not at war with Finland and does not threaten the Finnish people. The Soviet Union is in peaceful relations with the Democratic Republic of Finland, with the government

which on December 2 of this year the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship was concluded. There was no war. Relations were peaceful. The Red Army, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and the glorious "Stalin's falcons" unselfishly helped the "people's government" in its heroic struggle against the rebellious "Mannerheim gangs" ...

Laughter with laughter, but even on the secret topographic maps of the area of military operations, issued by the Cartographic Department of the General Staff of the Red Army at the beginning of 1940, instead of the "normal" line of the state border of the USSR, the border line with "Kuusinen's Finland" was depicted, which border in the area of \u200b\u200b northern Karelia passed almost next to the Kirov railway... Of course, all these

absurd statements did not create absolutely insurmountable obstacles to the conclusion of a full-fledged, legally significant peace treaty. All it took was to draw up, sign and hand over three documents to the Finnish delegation. A competent Foreign Ministry official could compile them in a couple of hours. The first document is a statement by the "Kuusinen government" about self-dissolution. The second is a joint statement by the government of the USSR and the "People's Government of the Finnish Democratic Republic" that, in connection with the self-dissolution of the "People's Government", the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship concluded on December 2, 1939, is recognized as having lost its legal force. The third document would have been of the most sensitive nature - it would have been necessary to disavow Molotov's scandalous statements in one form or another. As one of the possible options, the corresponding paper could be signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Comrade. Kalinin (comrade Stalin, as one of the many ordinary deputies of the USSR Armed Forces, of course, could not disavow the statements of the head of the government of the USSR). But, perhaps,

Comrade Molotov, the head of the Soviet government (and concurrently also People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs), due to the gaps in his education, did not know and did not understand this simple legal technique? Nothing like this. He was well aware of the existence of a legal conflict associated with the existence of the "people's government of democratic Finland", which he informed the deputies of the workers at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR held on March 29, 1940: "... we turned to the People's Government of Finland to find out its opinion *on question of ending the war. The People's Government spoke in favor of the fact that in order to stop the bloodshed and alleviate the situation of the Finnish people, it would be necessary to meet the proposal to end the war ... The agreement between the USSR and Finland soon took place ... In connection with this, the question arose of self-dissolution of the People's Government, which they carried out* " [101].

True, Comrade Molotov played a trick this time too, putting in his speech the cart before the horse.

It was not the conclusion of a peace treaty that made it necessary to self-dissolve the "Kuusinen government", but quite the opposite: the elimination of the puppet pseudo-government of a non-existent country was a necessary condition for negotiating and concluding an agreement with the legitimate government of Finland. However, much more important than the turns of speech used by Molotov is the date. Molotov's report was delivered on March 29, and the Moscow Treaty was signed on March 12. No other official documents (unless the speech at the session of the Supreme Court can be considered a "document" of international legal significance) about

self-dissolution of the "Kuusinen government", as well as the recognition by the Soviet Union of the legitimate government and president of Finland, was

not done. Thus, in the late evening of March 12, 1940, an agreement was signed in Moscow with representatives of the "White Finnish gangs", who raised an armed rebellion against the government of "democratic Finland", with which the USSR at that time was bound by the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship. The case in the history of diplomacy of civilized countries is unique. But hardly accidental - most likely, Stalin was quite consciously in no hurry with the "self-dissolution" of Kuusinen, holding him back like a card sharper holding a false ace up his sleeve. Only after the "game" was completed, the treaty with Finland was signed, and the threat of intervention by the Anglo-French bloc temporarily receded. Stalin allowed the "people's government" to be dissolved.

If the presence of an extra government and "two Finlands" created rather a farcical situation, then the conclusion of a "peace treaty" in an environment of ongoing aggression allows us to raise the question of the legal inconsistency of this document as a whole. Let us explain the essence of the problem with one concrete example, moreover, having the most direct relation to the Soviet-Finnish wars. The third and last of these wars was completed as follows:

- September 4, 1944 ceasefire agreement came into force; - On
- September 19, 1944, an armistice agreement was signed; -
- On February 10, 1947, a peace treaty was signed.

It can be assumed that the implementation of this procedure for withdrawing from the war was due to the fact that this time, not the Soviet Union, but a whole group of countries of the anti-Hitler coalition, including the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, acted as one of the parties to the armistice agreement and the Peace Treaty. In such a situation, the possibilities of Stalin's "lawlessness" were significantly limited. In March 1940, the Finnish delegation was summoned to Moscow and offered to sign a certain document under the "muzzle of guns" - in the literal and figurative sense of this expression. Neither an agreement on a long-term truce, nor at least a temporary agreement on a ceasefire for the period of negotiations was reached (more correctly, they were categorically rejected by the Soviet side), and the Moscow Treaty was signed directly during the war. As for the nature of this war, the League of Nations characterized it as an aggression of the Soviet Union against a neutral, peace-loving country, and even the Kremlin drafters of the text of the Moscow Treaty did not have the audacity to blame Finland for anything, evasively describing the war as "military actions that arose between both *countries*". And no more. Not a word was said in the preamble of the Moscow Treaty about any "provocative shelling of Soviet territory" or about any "threat to Leningrad".

In this case, it would be quite appropriate to ask the question: was the Moscow Peace Treaty of March 12, 1940, a voluntary agreement between the parties or another stage in the implementation of the aggression unleashed by Stalin? And if the international community recognized Finland's right to armed resistance to aggression, was this right lost in connection with the signing of the Moscow Treaty? Simply put, how is a "peace treaty" concluded in the context of ongoing armed violence different from an IOU obtained by extortionists using an iron and



soldering iron? Does such a "receipt" impose any obligations on the victim of extortionists, other than the moral obligation of a law-abiding citizen to contact law enforcement agencies and help them catch criminals?

The government of the USSR immediately gave a simple answer to this entire "package" of complex international legal issues. The patience of the Soviet leadership was enough for exactly one week. On March 20, 1940, it openly demonstrated its attitude towards the Peace Treaty signed in Moscow. On this day, units of the Red Army, without any agreement with the Finnish side, crossed the line of the new border and occupied the

village of Enso. This settlement was not simple, but, one might say, "golden". Near the small village there was a huge, one of the largest in the world, pulp and paper mill (sulfite plant, sulfate plant, cardboard factory, paper factory and chemical plant producing chlorine for pulp bleaching). A complete, technologically complete complex of enterprises capable of producing cellulose in the amount of 50% of the production in the entire USSR. Due to an unfortunate oversight

of the performers (and also due to great haste), the plant was forgotten at the negotiations in Moscow, and the line of the new border, drawn through the Enso railway station on a large-scale geographical map, left the plant on the Finnish side. In parentheses, we note that in a similar situation with the metallurgical plant in Vartsila (Ladoga Karelia), the line on the map was prudently curved to the northwest, and the plant ended up on the annexed territory.

The oversight with Enso (which, under certain conditions of that era, could easily be reclassified as "sabotage") was immediately corrected by a direct armed seizure. The Soviet representatives simply did not consider it necessary to enter into any negotiations with the "White Finns". Later, after the end of the 3rd Soviet-Finnish war, the village of Enso received a new, Soviet, life-affirming name Svetogorsk. If you, dear reader, look at the packaging of toilet paper stored in your bathroom, you may find the inscription "Svetogorsk Pulp and Paper Mill" on it. The armed seizure of the plant in Enso immediately

set the following task for the Soviet leadership - now it was necessary to ensure reliable protection of such valuable production, and for this ... Yes, of course, for this it was necessary to move the border again. On May 9, 1940, Deputy Head of the Main Directorate of Camps (GULAG) of the NKVD of the USSR, Major of State Security G.M. Orlov writes a memorandum addressed to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Comrade Bulganin [102]. Noting the enormous economic importance of the plant in Enso, Comrade Orlov proceeds to constructive proposals:

*"Therefore, it is necessary to do **everything possible** (emphasized by Comrade Orlov) to keep the Finnish border as far away from this plant as possible. the border that is currently being outlined cannot by any means be admissible."*

It's funny. This is the mildest thing that a person who is not privy to the secrets of the Kremlin court could say about this memorandum. In fact, only the deputy chief security guard, in a more than modest rank of Major GB for resolving such issues, instructs the deputy head of government on a problem that has nothing to do with Major Orlov's official powers, and even calls "in no way

*inadmissible case*” that line of the border, which was established by an interstate agreement signed by the head of the government of the USSR, a loyal ally of the great Stalin, comrade Molotov. Where does such courage, such agility come from? And they also say that “under Stalin, everyone was afraid to say a word against the will of the authorities ...”.

The casket and this time opens very simply. Comrade Orlov, deputy chief of the Gulag, was acting at that moment the duty ... of the chairman of the Soviet delegation to the joint Soviet-Finnish commission for the demarcation of the border! Perhaps this is the case about which they say: "The truth is more amazing than any fiction." The chief camp overseer draws the line of the new Finnish border - a more vivid metaphor for Stalin's unfulfilled hopes could not have been imagined. Yes, namely "unfulfilled". At that time, it was not possible to “remove the Finnish border” from Enso. Even at the minimum “distance” to the border city of Imatra (which will be mentioned many more times in this book). Probably because in the spring of 1940 Stalin was not yet ready to do **everything possible ...**

## Chapter 2.2

### "THE FINNISH PEOPLE WOULD BE HAPPY..."

If the hopes and dreams of Comrade Stalin in March 1940 were still very far from being fully realized, then Comrade Kuusinen had every reason to celebrate victory. Under his personal leadership, Finland joined the fraternal family of the Soviet republics as the "12th sister". True, it was some kind of new, "Karelian-Finnish", "reserve" Finland. But first things first. In the bloody cycle of tragic events at

the beginning of the "winter war", perhaps not everyone paid attention to the most amazing phrase repeated twice in the text of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and Friendship, concluded on December 2, 1939 with the so-called "people's government" Kuusinen. And it was said there nothing less than the following: *"The time has come for the fulfillment of the age-old aspirations of the Finnish people about the reunification of the Karelian people with their kindred Finnish people in a single Finnish state."*

Twenty years before this (and another half century after), the softest of expressions in which Soviet propaganda could characterize the intention of the Karelian people to reunite with the "kindred Finnish people", and even *"in a single **Finnish** (!!!) state"*, was something like: "brazen intervention of the White Finnish military in the internal affairs of Soviet Karelia" or "kulak White Guard banditry, supported from abroad by the reactionary circles of the Finnish bourgeoisie." Or they could (and still can) simply and without fuss name the events of 1918-1921. "White Finnish aggression against Soviet Russia". In the second half of the 1930s, at the peak of the "fight against Finnish bourgeois nationalism", any mention that Karelians and Finns are closely related was considered as incitement to rebellion. And now, on one day in December 1939, everything suddenly turned upside down (or, conversely, upside down - in the world of Soviet absurdity there was neither up nor down, but there was only one "general line").

It would seem that after the "self-dissolution of the people's government" in March 1940 (we emphasize once again that the exact date and the official statement on "self-dissolution" were never published), the "age-old aspirations" would be over - this time finally and irrevocably. However, life (more precisely, the plans of the Stalinist leadership) turned out to be more complicated than primitive schemes. The month of March had not yet ended when the 6th session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, *"meeting the wishes of the working people of the Karelian ASSR and guided by the principle of the free development of nationalities"* (what can be objected to such good intentions?), adopted the Law "On the transformation of the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic into the federal Karelian-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic. In accordance with Article 1 of this Law, the new Federal Republic received *"the territory that seceded from Finland to the USSR on the basis of a peace treaty between the USSR and Finland, with the exception of a small strip adjacent directly to Leningrad, including the cities of Vyborg, Antrea (Kamenogorsk), Kexholm (Priozersk), Sortavala, Suoyarvi, Kushayarvi.*

Thus, the Karelian-Finnish Union Republic turned out to be larger than modern Karelia, since it included part of the territory of the Karelian Isthmus (now part of the Leningrad Region of the Russian Federation) and a plot of annexed Finnish land in the Alakurtti-Salla region (now almost all of this territory is included in part of the Murmansk region of the Russian Federation, the city of Salla itself with the surrounding area was returned to Finland). In other words, the new-found "Karelo-Finland" received all the lands seized from the real Finland, with the exception of that section of the Karelian Isthmus, which the "people's government" of Kuusinen on December 2, 1939 handed over to the Soviet Union with a broad gesture of goodwill - it was included in the Leningrad region. The legal registration of the creation of the K-FSSR was

carried out as always - that is, very carelessly. Strictly speaking, the new republic turned out to be illegitimate, because they forgot to formalize the decision of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR on the issue of the withdrawal of the Karelian Autonomous Republic from the RSFSR (due to haste or because of the established habit of legal chaos). As a result, **the Constitution of the USSR was violated**, according to which a change in the territory and borders of a union republic without its consent was not allowed. And if the creation of the K-FSSR was something more than just another political farce, then it would create a serious transport problem for the RSFSR, since the Murmansk region would lose overland communication with the rest of the territory of the RSFSR and turn into a kind of "enclave" (like how, after the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of the state independence of Lithuania, the Kaliningrad region was cut off from the rest of Russia). Equally absurd was the sequence of legal acts that formalized the creation of the K-FSSR: on

March 31, 1940, the USSR Supreme Council "went to meet the wishes of the working people of Karelia", the very decision of the authorized body of power of these workers - the Supreme Council of the KaASSR - was adopted at an Extraordinary session of the Supreme Council of the KaASSR only two weeks later, on April 13, 1940 [107]. What kind of "workers" on the eve of March 31 asked the USSR Armed Forces to satisfy their "age-old aspirations" and transform the autonomous republic into a union one - this remains a mystery to this day.

The newborn union republic had almost "its own army". On May 7, 1940, People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov signed an order (one of the last in this position, since it was on that day that Voroshilov was removed from the post of People's Commissar), according to which it was required "to form the 71st Special Karelo Finnish Rifle Division by July 10 numbering 9000 people". The division was supposed to become "special" not only in name.

*"The division should be staffed with military personnel from among the Karelians and Finns liable for military service, primarily from the former corps of comrade. Anttila" [135].* Corps Comrade. Anttila is the same "1st Mountain Rifle Corps of the People's Army of Finland", which, according to the plans of the Kremlin rulers, was supposed to hoist the red banner over the presidential palace in Helsinki ...

The new union republic turned out to be large in terms of territory (like Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia combined), but at the same time tiny in terms of population. It did not even have one million inhabitants (which, according to the unspoken "norms", was considered a prerequisite for the creation of a union - and not an autonomous - republic). In the lists of voters for the first elections of the Supreme

Only 497 thousand people were registered at the Council of the K-FSSR. The fact that 98.5% of voters supported the candidates of the indestructible bloc of communists and non-party people in the elections is not surprising. Another thing is more interesting - the national composition of the people's representatives (which composition, again according to the "tacit norms" of that time, was formed in advance more or less in proportion to the national composition of the inhabitants). So, out of 133 deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the K-FSSR, Russians, as well as representatives of other nationalities (except for the "titular"), there were 88 people (66%). In order to disguise **the almost complete absence of the Finns**, they were combined with the Karelians in the official report ("45 Karelians and Finns") [107]. As noted above, after the mass repressions of the 1930s, a tiny minority of the already small Finnish population of the region remained alive and at large. The ensuing war with Finland brought Stalin a territory without people - almost the entire population of the annexed territories (400 thousand people of all nationalities) left along with the retreating Finnish army. It was then that an anecdote was born: "Two Finns live in the Karelian-Finnish Republic: FINinspektor and FINKelshtein, but this, according to rumors, is one Jew." In addition to the legendary

Finn "Finkelstein", the no less legendary Finn Kuusinen was in the Karelian-Finnish Republic. For "feeding and honor" (the standard wording of the decrees of the Moscow tsars), he was granted an honorary, but at the same time, virtually deprived of real power, the title of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Court of the K-FSSR. The real one, i.e. party power remained in the same hands: the former First Secretary of the Karelian Regional Committee G.N. Kupriyanov (Russian by nationality). Yu.V. Andropov, yes, the very one ...

The fact that the real national composition of the population of the republic did not correspond to its name could not be considered something out of the ordinary (the only quantitative measure of this discrepancy was the name "Finnish" in the almost complete absence of Finns). But the campaign **for accelerated and total "finization" that began in the K-FSSR was absolutely unprecedented**. We read in the minutes of the meetings of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Karelian-Finnish Communist

Party. - May 4, 1941 *"Develop and submit for approval by the Bureau of the Central Committee by May measures to translate office work into Finnish..."* [108];

- May 9, 1941 *"All broadcasting should be conducted in two languages - Finnish and Russian, leaving (temporarily) some programs in the Karelian language ... Create a Karelian-Finnish national choir under the Karelian Radio Committee within a month. a Finnish vocal group and a group of reciters..."* [109]. - May 28, 1941

*"Translate office work from Karelian to Finnish by July 1, 1940 ... Ensure the replacement of signboards on the streets by July 10 ... Develop a project of activities for the study of the Finnish language by party and Soviet activists ... Translate teaching in Karelian schools into Finnish ...* » [100];

- June 19, 1940 *from Karelian into Finnish, the regional newspapers Krasnaya Kestenga, Krasnaya Tunguda, Louhskiy Bolshevik... Instead of the Karelia magazine in Karelian, from July 1, to start publishing the Puna Lipnu (Red Banner) magazine in Finnish* [111].

It is difficult to say whether the party and Soviet activists managed to learn the Finnish language (very far from Russian in phonetics and vocabulary), but the cardboard folders in which the minutes of the bureau meetings were filed had changed radically by the beginning of 1941: the composition of the documents and the rules for keeping records were printed in Latin on Finnish, on all seals and stamps the inscription in Finnish is engraved in large letters, and only in small letters - in Russian. What is this all for? *"Guided by the principle of the free development of nationalities,"* it was impossible to think of such an absurdity. For the vast majority of the population, who spoke and wrote Russian, all this "Chinese writing" only created unnecessary inconvenience. The Karelians, who make up a smaller part of the population, were not in the best position at all. They could still understand the Finnish language by ear (just as a Russian person will understand the Ukrainian language in general terms), but the Finnish script, based on the Latin script, was fundamentally different from the Karelian language built on

the Cyrillic alphabet. Everything is relative. The uniqueness of the situation (artificial and forcible introduction of a virtually foreign language, and the language of one of the "backward bourgeois nations") that has developed in the Karelian-Finnish SSR becomes especially evident when compared with how the language issue was resolved in other "newly acquired" territories of the Soviet Union. The most correct comparison would be with the development of events in Moldova.

Since 1924, the Moldavian Autonomous Republic (territorially coinciding with the current self-proclaimed Transnistria) existed as part of the Ukrainian SSR. On June 28-30, 1940, the troops of the Red Army crossed the Dniester and occupied the territory between the Prut and Dniester rivers (the historical region of Bessarabia). On August 2, 1940, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a law on the creation of a new, 13th in a row, union republic, which included the territory of the former Moldavian ASSR and Bessarabia many times larger in area. The new union republic, however, was not called the Romanian-Moldavian (or Bessarabo-Moldavian), but simply and without fuss received the name of the Moldavian SSR. There was no question of any use of the Romanian language in Soviet Moldavia. Moreover, a new, "Moldovan language" was actually created, made from the original Romanian, translated into Cyrillic and saturated with Russian-sounding words. This strange philological monster was declared the state language of the Moldavian SSR, while the use of the language of neighboring Romania was mercilessly

suppressed. Events unfolded similarly in the regions of Eastern Poland occupied in September 1939. In accordance with the political situation of the moment, they did not create new union republics at that time, and the occupied Polish lands were divided into three (unequal in area) parts: the city of Vilna and the surrounding areas were presented to Lithuania (which, in less than a year, had to make sure that free cheese is only in a mousetrap), the area north of the river. Pripyat (Bialystok, Brest and Grodno provinces) was attached to the Byelorussian SSR, the territory south of Pripyat - to the Ukrainian SSR. The use of the word "Poland" was imposed an unspoken, but strict ban. Not only in public speeches, but also in secret military documents, the expressions "former Poland" or "general government" were used exclusively and only. As one would expect, the Polish language was consistently ostracized in the official

office work, from government agencies and the army. Well, voluntarily compulsory courses in the study of the Polish language could only be dreamed of by a party activist in a nightmare.

History, as they say, repeats itself: what was a tragedy returns in the form of a farce. This idea is quite applicable to the history of the appearance in the spring of 1940 of the sham "Karelian-Finland". History of the Karelian Labor Commune 1920–1923 was undeniably tragic. But it was a heroic tragedy - with all the delusions and immoderate ambitions shown by the leaders of the "Red Finns", it cannot be denied that many of them quite sincerely believed in the ideals of communism, in the future of the world revolution. And in any case, with their martyrdom in some dungeons, they more than atoned for all their voluntary and involuntary sins. The hastily put together Karelian-Finnish SSR of the 1940 model, in which the nomenklatura officials gathered from all over Russia stared with amazement at the Finnish inscriptions and the Finnish seals on the forms of the documents they signed, was an example of a crude public farce. The farce was crude, but was it stupid? In order to appreciate the decision made on June 19, 1940 to translate the newspapers Krasnaya Tunguda and Loukhsky Bolshevik into Finnish (and dozens of similar decisions), one should remember what all these dates meant on the big calendar. European

politicians.

On May 10, 1940, German troops on the Western Front launched a long-awaited offensive. Of the 156 divisions in the Wehrmacht, 136 (87%) were allocated for the war with France and its allies. In the vast expanses of Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany proper, only 13 divisions were left (another 7 divisions fought in Norway). Almost all the forces of the Luftwaffe were also concentrated in the West. From the air defense districts of Königsberg, Breslau, Dresden, Nuremberg, Vienna, all fighters were removed to one. The headquarters of the 3rd fighter squadron and only one of its fighter groups (II / JG-3 - 39 serviceable aircraft as of May 10, 1940) were left in the air defense zone of Berlin. A blow of crushing power broke through the defenses of the allied armies. On the evening of May 14, the Dutch army ceased resistance, on May 23 the Wehrmacht tank divisions reached the English Channel, on May 27 Belgium capitulated, on the night of June 3-4 the last British units left the coast of Dunkirk, on June 12 Paris was declared an "open city", on June 17 the French government asked the Germans for a ceasefire. On June 24, 1940, in the Compiègne forest, at the very place where in November 1918 the German command signed the terms of surrender, an armistice agreement was concluded. Under

this agreement, France lost two-thirds of its territory, lost its huge navy and most of its military aviation. In short, from the category of the great powers of Europe, it was moving into the category of a semi-independent protectorate of Germany. Having lost all its allies on the continent, Britain now found itself in the position of a besieged fortress, the survival of which depended on the ability of the extremely small fighter units of the Royal Air Force to hold back the air offensive of the bomber armadas.

the Luftwaffe, and even from the ability of the British fleet to break through the blockade of German submarines and provide the island with food.

For Stalin, everything that happened in May-June 1940 meant a radical (and largely unexpected) change in the military-political situation, a dizzying turn that created new threats, but also promised new benefits. Speaking on June 13, 1940 with the ambassador of fascist Italy A. Rosso, the head of the Soviet government Molotov said: *"... After the serious blows received by England and France, not only their strength, but also their prestige fell and the domination of these countries is coming to an end. It must be assumed that the voices of Germany and Italy, as well as the Soviet Union, will be more audible than even a year ago ... England and France, as events show, with their old political foundations do not stand the test. Other countries turned out to be more adapted to the new conditions than they are. Italy gave a lot of new things, Germany gave a lot of new things. The USSR also gave a lot of new things, following its own path..."* [113]. On June 17, 1940, the German

ambassador to the USSR, Count Schulenburg, reported to Berlin: *"Molotov invited me to his office tonight and expressed those very warm congratulations from the Soviet government on the occasion of the brilliant success of the German armed forces ..."* [70]. In this case, Comrade Molotov showed commendable modesty. The brilliant success of the German army did not take place without the help of the USSR. Not to mention the general military-political situation created by the pact. comrade Molotov and the Nazi criminal, warmonger Ribbentrop, which situation allowed Germany to concentrate all the forces of the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe on one - the Western - front. The Soviet Union rendered considerable services to its ally in the course of the campaign itself. So. On May 23, 1940, Schulenburg informed Molotov *"that he had received a number of telegrams from Berlin with requests to increase the supply of petroleum products, which is extremely important in view of the events now taking place on the Western Front."*

And what? *"Molotov replied that the question of the desired amount of oil products did not raise objections from the Soviet side. He spoke a few hours ago on this issue with Comrade. Mikoyan, and all the proposals of the German government were accepted. Full consent given. During the current operations, both gasoline and gas oil are really needed for the German army, whose operations are remarkably successful ..."* [113]. The combat brotherhood

of the red-browns grew stronger day by day. On July 24, 1940, this time from Rome to Moscow, a dispatch arrived. The ambassador of the Soviet Union enthusiastically reported on his meeting with the leader of fascist Italy: *"... Mussolini met me at the door of his huge office. During the conversation, he was kind and at the end of the audience he escorted me to the door of the office ... Mussolini emphasized that at the moment the three countries of the USSR, Italy and Germany - despite the difference in internal regimes (and this is the absolute truth: Italy did not have its own Kolyma . - M.S.), there is one common task: it is the struggle against the plutocracy, against the exploiters and warmongers in the West"* [113].

Western plutocrats in the new situation that took shape in the summer of 1940 ceased to be dangerous for the USSR. Thus, **the main reason that once forced the Soviet Union to show restraint and pardon Finland has disappeared.** Today we can only guess in what terms comrade



Stalin expressed his annoyance at the fact that the defeat of the Anglo-French troops took place not in March, but in May. On the other hand, we can quite accurately, on the basis of documents declassified 10-15 years ago, recreate a picture of what Comrade Stalin did in practice.

On May 30, 1940, the Izvestiya newspaper published an official report by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR about the atrocious crimes of the Lithuanian military, which "kidnaps and tortures" ordinary Red Army soldiers from the Soviet military garrisons stationed in Lithuania since the autumn of 1939 in order to obtain military secrets. True, the Soviet side constantly confused the specific names of the "kidnapped Red Army soldiers" [34]. The proposal of the Lithuanian side to conduct a joint investigation was rejected with anger and indignation.

*"The Lithuanian authorities, under the guise of investigating and taking measures against the perpetrators, are cracking down on friends of the USSR"* - this was stated in the directive of the Political Directorate of the Red Army No. 5258 of June 13, 1940 [34].

On June 3, 1940, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal Timoshenko, issued Order No. 0028, according to which the Red Army troops deployed in the territory of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were excluded from their military districts and transferred to the direct subordination of the People's Commissar of Defense through his deputy, commander 2nd rank A.D. Loktionova (in the future Colonel General, commander of the troops of the newly created Baltic Military District) [120]. On June 8, 1940, Loktionov received an order to prepare the airfields of the Baltic states, where, in accordance with the agreements of October 1939, Soviet air units were stationed, "for defense and receiving landing troops" [122]. On June 11, in the Belarusian city of Lida, not far from the border with Lithuania, a meeting was held between the command of the Belarusian OBO and the 11th Army, at which the operation plan and tasks of the troops of the 11th Army were approved, which, together with the 16th Special Rifle Corps stationed in Lithuania was supposed to *"encircle and destroy the enemy in the Kaunas region, preventing his withdrawal to East Prussia"* [34]. In general, for the Baltic operation near the borders of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as part of three armies (8th, 3rd and 11th), 20 rifle, 2 motorized rifle, 4 cavalry divisions, 9 tank and 1 airborne brigades were concentrated [34].

After the completion of the deployment of troops near the borders of the Baltic states, the word taken by Soviet diplomacy.

Late in the evening (one might say - at night), at 23.50 on June 14, 1940, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania Urshbis (he had already been in Moscow since June 10) was summoned to Molotov's office. There he was read the text of the statement of the Soviet government, in which the following was said verbatim: *"The Soviet government considers it absolutely necessary and urgent:*

- 1. That the Minister of the Interior, the city of Skucas, and the head of the political police department, the city of Povelaitis, be immediately put on trial as direct culprits of provocative actions against the Soviet garrison in Lithuania.*
- 2. That a government be immediately formed in Lithuania that would be capable and ready to ensure the honest implementation of the Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the resolute curbing of the enemies of the Treaty.*

- 3. To immediately ensure free access to the territory of Lithuania for Soviet military units to deploy them in the most important centers of Lithuania in*

*sufficient to enable the implementation of the Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty of Mutual Assistance and prevent provocative actions directed against the Soviet garrison in Lithuania. The Soviet government considers the fulfillment of*

*these requirements to be the elementary condition without which it is impossible to ensure that the Soviet-Lithuanian Mutual Assistance Treaty is carried out honestly and in good faith. The Soviet government is awaiting a response from the Lithuanian government by 10 am on June 15. Failure to receive a response from the Lithuanian government by this deadline will be considered as a refusal to fulfill the above requirements of the Soviet Union" [120].*

Thus, the Lithuanian government was given 10 hours to think. The official Soviet record of the meeting between Molotov and Urshbis preserved, in particular, the following details of the conversation: "... Urbshis addresses Comrade. Molotov with a request, referring to an extremely difficult and crucial moment in the life of Lithuania, to postpone the deadline mentioned in the statement of the Soviet government. Tov. Molotov replies that he announced to him the decision of the Soviet government, in which he cannot change a single letter ... Further, comrade. Molotov warns Urbshis that if the answer is delayed, the Soviet government will immediately implement its measures, and unconditionally ... Comrade. Molotov emphasizes that the aforementioned statement of the Soviet government is urgent, and if its demands are not accepted on time, then Soviet troops will be sent to Lithuania immediately.

*...Urbšys says that he does not see an article on the basis of which it would be possible to prosecute the Minister of the Interior Skucas and the head of the political police Povelaitis. Asks how to be? Tov. Molotov says that **first of all they need to be arrested and put on trial, and the articles will be found** (emphasis mine. - M.S.). Yes, and Soviet lawyers can help in this ... " [120].*

On June 16, similar ultimatums were presented to Latvia and Estonia (the only difference was the absence of demands for the arrests of the ministers of the interior of these states, since they did not manage to announce the "abductions of Red Army soldiers" in Latvia and Estonia in advance). Delivery of ultimatums to comrade. Molotov accompanied the same boorish comments as in the "conversation" with Urshbis. Any intervention by England in the events under the real conditions of June 1940 was out of the question. On the other hand, the German leadership, strictly adhering to the terms of the agreement on the division of production, agreed on August 23 and September 28, 1939 in Moscow, categorically refused to provide any assistance to the Baltic states. Moreover, the German Foreign Ministry "politely but firmly" refused to even officially accept the notes of protest with which the ambassadors of the perishing states addressed Berlin. On June 17, a circular telegram was sent to all German diplomatic missions abroad, stating: *"The unhindered strengthening of Russian troops in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and the reorganization of governments concerns only Russia and the Baltic states ... Please avoid making any statements during conversations, which can be interpreted as biased" [70].* On June 16–17, the troops of the Red Army did not meet resistance. began moving deep

into the territories of the Baltic states, completely completing their occupation by June 21. June 17, at a time when huge columns of tanks and

trucks rolled along the roads of the Baltic States, the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal Timoshenko, sent Comrade Stalin memorandum No. 390, in which he formulated the following proposals:

*"...2. To introduce one (first of all) regiment of NKVD troops into each of the occupied republics to protect internal order. 3. It is possible to resolve the issue with the "governments" (the quotes are in the text of the memorandum. - M.S.) of the occupied republics as soon as possible. 4. To begin disarming and disbanding the armies of the occupied republics. To disarm the population, the police and the existing paramilitary organizations... 6. Resolutely proceed with the Sovietization of the occupied republics. 7. Form the Baltic Military District on the territory of the occupied republics with headquarters in Riga..." [123].*

This memorandum testifies to the amazing gift of foresight, which was endowed with the highest military-political leadership of the USSR. On June 17, it already knew for sure that on July 14, in the elections of new parliaments, 95% of the voters of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia would unanimously vote for the only list of candidates, that on July 21, the unanimously elected deputies of the people would turn to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with a request to accept them into the fraternal family Soviet republics. How else, without being sure of all this, could one in his right mind make a decision to create a military district of the Red Army on the territory of three FOREIGN (as of June 17, 1940) states?

Behind the big deeds of the "Sovietization of the occupied republics", the fate of the "kidnapped" servicemen was completely forgotten. Moreover, they forgot precisely when the establishment of complete military control over the Baltic states opened up seemingly unlimited opportunities for searching for the "abducted", for bringing the guilty to trial, and the bodies of the "Red Army soldiers tortured by the Lithuanian military" - to the ground. Alas, neither the Soviet press nor the secret orders of the Soviet military command ever told the fighters and commanders of the Red Army about the fate of their "missing" comrades ... Without stopping there and without the slightest pause, Comrade Stalin turned his eagle gaze to the

southwest. Romania was required to transfer to the Soviet Union not only Bessarabia, but also Bukovina, which had never been part of the Russian Empire (and, more significantly, was not mentioned in any way in the secret protocol on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe between Germany and the USSR dated 23 August 1939). The following rather non-trivial idea was used as an argument in the Statement of the USSR government: *"In 1918, Romania, taking advantage of Russia's military weakness, forcibly seized from the Soviet Union (Russia) part of its territory - Bessarabia - and thereby violated the age-old unity of Bessarabia, populated **mainly Ukrainians** (emphasized by me. — M.S.), with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic" [120].* In reality, on the territory of Bessarabia, on December 2, 1917, the Moldavian Democratic Republic was formed, whose parliament in March 1918 decided to unite Moldova with Romania. Soviet official historiography has always interpreted this decision as "the occupation of Bessarabia by Romania." Another thing is more interesting - in June 1940, the "age-old aspirations" of the Ukrainian (???) population of Bessarabia, "torn away from Russia", announced a desire to reunite with Ukraine (???), and only later was it invented and

a new "agenastic aspiration" was immediately realized, for the implementation of which the "independent" Moldavian SSR was created ...

It was precisely in these days that were rapidly turning the world upside down in Finland, far from Paris and Bucharest, that another organization was born, proclaiming its goal "the fight against the exploiters and warmongers." The newborn was called quite harmoniously: "The Society for Peace and Friendship with the USSR."

As far as the name suggests, the goals of the Society were the most noble: to promote the reconciliation of two peoples who had just survived a bloody civil strife. What is better? It is simply amazing that in our country the history of this charitable institution is almost unknown. Only very few books contain the briefest references to the creation of the "Society", about the rallies and demonstrations held by it in defense of peace and friendship. Moreover, in Molotov's speech at the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 1, 1940, one can read a strange phrase, probably related to the activities of the "Society": *"It is clear that if some elements of the Finnish ruling circles do not stop their repressive actions against the social strata of Finland striving to strengthen good-neighborly relations with the USSR, then relations between the USSR and Finland may suffer damage"* [126]. That, in fact, is all. And yet - who seeks, he finds. An interesting collection of documents (RGASPI, f. 516, op. 2, d. 1544, d. 1547) was found in the archive of the Comintern stored in the RGASPI, which shed light on the goals and objectives of the Society for Peace and Friendship.

The very history of the appearance of these documents is quite remarkable. In December 1940, the "Finnish plutocracy" decisively suppressed the activities of the "Society" - the organization was banned, the activists were arrested and put on trial. Already after the start of the 2nd Finnish War, 290 political prisoners were released from Finnish prisons, restored to civil rights and included in a specially formed battalion. On September 1, this military unit arrived at the front in northern Karelia. On September 16-18, 1941, a group of 54 Finnish communists crossed the front line and surrendered to the Red Army. In the archives of the Comintern, handwritten reports of several members of this group about the work that they, as leaders of district and city organizations of the Communist Party of Finland (CPF), carried out until the day of their arrest, have been preserved. The translation of documents into Russian was completed in January 1942. Here are brief excerpts from these reports. Laakso Eino "On

the work of the KPF in Tampere": *"After the war in Tampere, they held a meeting of the activists, at which they gave an assessment regulations and operating instructions.*

*But in this assessment, we overestimated the course of events, and therefore our assessment was incorrect. We were of the opinion that **events in Finland would develop in the same way as in the Baltic countries** (emphasized by me. -*

*M.S) ... Trade union, women's, military sections worked in our organization, but the work of the latter was very limited and consisted mainly in connections with the army, in acquiring several weapons, explosives and in obtaining important military secrets..."* [114]. Kaino Rauhalinna "Brief report on the work of

the KPF in the city of Salo":

*"Since the beginning of 1941, an organization has also been working, obtaining military information. The tasks of this organization included obtaining information about military transports, about the location of troops, about weapons and ammunition depots, about airfields, etc. " [119]. Paavo Mendelin "On the work of the CPF in*

*the Union of Peace and Friendship": "In the organization of the union in Tampere, the leadership of the party was clear. In the committee elected at the organizational meeting, out of 6 members, four were members of the Party and worked in the Union on the instructions of the party ... On July 30, at the meeting of the Union in Tampere, a declaration of the party addressed to Prime Minister Ryti was read, in which they demanded a replacement of the government and*

*bringing to justice perpetrators of the war..." [115].*

Reino V. Kosunen "On the work of the CPF in Kuopio": *"In June 1940, I took to Kuopio instructions on organizing the Union of Peace and Friendship, a written report on the assessment of the situation*

*and instructions on the immediate tasks of the party ..." [ 116]. Yurie Helenius*

*"Report on the work of the district committee of the Communist Party of Finland in the mountains. Turku and its environs": "During the war, the district committee tried to organize those who had deserted from military service in an active partisan struggle against the White Finns ... A meeting of the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union was scheduled for August 7, 1940, but it was forbidden on behalf of the local authorities. The workers gathered and, at the suggestion of the district committee of the party, staged a demonstration, went to the market square and the police prison, **demanding the resignation of the government** (emphasis mine. - M.S.). Clashes erupted between unarmed workers and policemen armed with manual machine guns (so in the text of the translation. - M.S.) , as a result of which 8 workers and 4 policemen died, and*

Leino Reino, Turku (the document is not titled): *"All*

*the activities planned by the party in connection with the demonstration on August 7 went exactly according to plan..." [118].*

Based on the reports of the Finnish comrades, an official of the Comintern Comrade. Vilkov compiled a voluminous (58 typewritten pages) report entitled "On the work of the Communist Party of Finland on the eve of the German-Soviet war." The name is rather strange - by that time (the report was signed by the compiler on May 11, 1942) in all the newspapers of the Soviet Union this war was already called the Great Patriotic War ...

After retelling in detail (almost verbatim) the messages of the Finnish communists, Comrade Vilkov moved on to assessments and conclusions. Regarding the events of August 7, 1940 (more precisely, about the absence of similar events in the following days), a rather vague phrase was written: *" After August 7, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Finland banned any demonstrations or mass demonstrations. Part of the party members considered this decision of the Central Committee to be erroneous, but did not violate it" [124].* It is difficult to understand the position of the author. In the party of Lenin-Stalin (of which the Comintern was a branch), such "pluralism of opinions", to put it mildly, was not encouraged. Someone had to be called an "anti-party group": either "part of the members" or "capitulators and splitters" who had seized power in the Central Committee. This often happened in the Comintern parties, but in such a case, the higher authorities (the Executive Committee of the Comintern) had to appoint "healthy forces" and instruct them to "smash a group of opportunists who had dug in in the Central Committee."

On the other hand, the overall assessment given to the activities of the Society for Peace and Friendship with the USSR was quite unambiguous. The society failed to cope with the responsible task entrusted to it. *"One of the biggest achievements of the party was the creation on its initiative and under its leadership of the Society for Peace and Friendship. However, as a result of weakness and especially indistinctness on the part of the leadership of the party, it was not possible to turn this organization into such a force that would break the back of the Finnish bourgeoisie* (emphasized by me. - M.S.)

" [125]. Such an unfortunate failure happened - the Peace Society could not "break the back" ... Now let's try to summarize the available information. It is quite obvious and beyond doubt that the Society for Peace and Friendship was created, organized and led by the Communist Party of Finland, i.e. **an illegal paramilitary subversive organization** whose activities were strictly controlled from Moscow. The immediate task assigned to the "Society" was to destabilize the internal political situation in Finland. This task was attempted to be achieved by a combination of political (promotion of a demand for "replacement of the government" that clearly goes beyond the statutory tasks of the "Society of Peace and Friendship") and power (organization of street riots) actions. The scale and malicious intent of these riots can be judged from the tragic events of August 7 in Turku (a major port city on the shores of the Gulf of Finland), where, as a result of a massacre between "unarmed (?) workers" and armed with machine guns, police officers were killed 4 policemen and several dozen the person was injured. Moreover, these events were by no means the result of a spontaneous (or even provoked by a group of instigators) exit of the situation from the control of the organizers of the demonstration. No, they (the organizers) acted according to the previously considered scenario and were quite satisfied with the result (*"all the events planned by the party in connection with the demonstration on August 7 went exactly a*

However, the matter was also not without provocations. At the beginning of August 1940, the "Society" spread the message that in the next two weeks the Red Army would occupy key points in Finland under the pretext of the need to protect and ensure rail transport along the Vyborg-Hanko line (a great friend wrote about this in his memoirs published in Stockholm USSR, the Finnish ambassador in Moscow, and then the country's president Yu.K. Paasikivi) [103]. There is also

no doubt about the strategic task set in Moscow for the Finnish communists and the "Peace Society" led by them (*"we were of the opinion that events in Finland would develop in the same way as in the Baltic countries"*). With even greater, ultimate frankness, the strategic line of the Comintern (i.e., the Stalinist leadership of the USSR) in relation to Finland is revealed in the "Letter to the Finnish Communists", compiled by the leading group of the Central Committee of the PCF, located in the Soviet Union (the document was signed by Kuusinen and Antikainen). The following tasks are set before the members of the PCF in Finland: *"... To expose to the masses the class character of the main slogan of the Finnish bourgeoisie: "Defending the independence of Finland" ... The Finnish people would be happy if they received such freedom and independence as the peoples of Karelian-Finnish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian Soviet republics. Thus, our party, rejecting and exposing the slogan of "defending the independence of Finland", links the question of ensuring*

*independence of Finland and the Finnish people with **the task of turning Finland into a Soviet republic*** (emphasized by me. — M.S.)" [127].

There are two questions that are debatable. First, the scenario of the planned transition from "destabilization to Sovietization" is not entirely clear. One can only assume that the Karelian-Finnish SSR was created (and was actively "fininized" in the summer of 1940) precisely in order to further carry out the "transformation of Finland into a Soviet republic" not as the absorption of a small country by a huge neighbor, but into a somewhat more plausible form of "reunification of the Karelian and Finnish peoples in a single state." On the other hand, it would be too frivolous to hope that the people of Finland, who survived the hardest days of the "winter war", will agree "voluntarily-compulsorily" (on the model of the three Baltic countries) to reunite with Kuusinen's "Karelian-Finland". It is hard to believe that Stalin could

have planned such a simple game. Perhaps the bloody street riots were only to create a propaganda pretext for a full-scale invasion of the Red Army troops. As Mannerheim writes in his memoirs, *"in Helsinki, according to a well-known model, communist demonstrations were staged, the purpose of which was to provoke a crisis. When a group of brawlers was detained during street riots, the USSR ambassador protested to Prime Minister Ryti..."* [22]. Under such a scenario, the invasion could be justified by the need to save the "bleeding Finnish workers". Unfortunately, the available source base does not yet allow us to move beyond conjectures and assumptions. The second question is even more puzzling. Why, after all, neither the peace-loving "Society"

nor the victorious Red Army managed to "break the back of the Finnish bourgeoisie"? Why did *the "Central Committee of the Communist Party of Finland forbid any demonstrations after August 7"*, i.e. **actually stopped the destabilization campaign on the run?** Why did the occupation of Finland, expected by many and so "logical" in the situation of summer-autumn 1940, never take place? And we do not have a convincing answer to this question. Some assumptions about the circumstances that influenced the adoption (better to say, non-acceptance) of the decision to invade can be obtained from an analysis of the purely military aspects of the situation in the summer-autumn of 1940, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 2.3

### A TROUBLE SUMMER

Chronologically, the first in a series of "Finnish issues" that the Soviet leadership decided in the first weeks. After the signing of the Moscow Peace Treaty on March 12, 1940, there was a ban on the creation of a military alliance between Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The background of the question is this. Throughout the Winter War, the governments of Norway and Sweden defiantly stepped aside from providing effective military assistance to the victim of aggression. Moreover, these two governments categorically refused to let the Anglo-French expeditionary force through the territory of their states. This refusal, firm, irrevocable and public, was actually used by Chamberlain and Daladier as a plausible pretext for endless delays in sending troops to Scandinavia (in the end, it all ended with the occupation of part of Finland by the troops of the Soviet Union and all of Norway by the troops of fascist Germany). On the other hand, the leaders of Norway and Sweden have repeatedly stated that their sympathies are entirely on the side of democratic Finland, and if Finland still exists after the end of the war, they will be ready to conclude a close military-political alliance with it. War is over. Finland, pretty battered but undefeated, survived. Immediately after the end of the war, in March 1940, negotiations began on the creation of

a defensive union of the Scandinavian countries. However, Moscow immediately "joined" these negotiations, which announced that Finland's participation in such an alliance would be considered a violation of the terms of the Peace Treaty of March 12, with all the ensuing consequences of such a violation. Of course, in the situation of the spring of 1940, Finland had no choice but to agree to this undisguised pressure. Noteworthy is the assessment of the history of the failed alliance given in Mannerheim's memoirs: *"The defensive alliance was conceived as the embodiment of the desire of the northern countries to protect their neutrality and independence, and its only goal was to preserve the status quo of the North, while*

*Finland would enter into an alliance with the borders established by Moscow treaty. An additional guarantee of the peaceful goals of the proposed alliance was the direct obligation of all its members not to start a war, unless the issue was a common defense against the aggressor. The Soviet Union's resistance to such a defensive alliance was a mistake. As the subsequent development of events showed, only Hitler, whose attack on Scandinavia did not meet with the joint resistance of Sweden and Norway,*

*benefited from his refusal. One may wonder if Hitler would have occupied Norway at all if he knew that he would come into open conflict with Sweden and Finland? A defensive alliance would automatically bring us to the side of Germany's opponents... By destroying the plans to create a defensive alliance, the USSR actually contributed to the fact that the Germans seized a foothold on the Norwegian coast of the Arctic Ocean. From there, they began to threaten Murmansk and stretched part of their communications by the shortest route through the north of Finland, and later, using the railway built by order*



*Soviet Union (Kemijärvi-Salla line), appeared dangerously close to Murmansk" [22].*  
Of course, the

position taken by the Soviet leadership on the issue of creating a defensive alliance of the Scandinavian countries was a "mistake" only in the assumption that the goal of Stalinist diplomacy was to maintain peace throughout the world and, above all, at the borders of the USSR. If we assume that the goals were completely different, then the assessment may change to the exact opposite. In the same way, depending on the intended goals and objectives, one should also evaluate the method of creating and arming a military base on the Hanko Peninsula, which was at the disposal of the Soviet Union under the terms of the Moscow Treaty.

In chapter 1.2. of this book, it has already been said that, as a justification for his claims to Hanko, Stalin put forward a purely defensive intention "to block the entrance to the Gulf of Finland with artillery fire." This intention is even theoretically impracticable (which was also discussed above). The events of 1940 showed that **no one even tried to put this absurd idea into practice.**

A firing structure (and a military unit that occupies this structure) designed to fight enemy ships (and in some cases capable of blocking the sea fairway with artillery fire) is called a "coastal battery". A coastal battery is not just a few cannons standing alone on the seashore. Let's explain this point in a little more detail.

In order for a coastal battery to be able to conduct an artillery duel with large surface ships of the enemy (up to and including heavy cruisers and battleships), it must at least not be inferior to them in two key parameters: armament and security. These requirements are quite feasible. Coastal batteries were most often armed with naval guns of the same calibers and systems that were installed on heavy ships. It was all the more possible to solve the issue of security - the coastal battery is motionless, and it should not have positive buoyancy. Thus, those restrictions on the dimensions and weight of armor protection, within which the design of warships takes place, can be neglected in the case of a coastal battery.

Almost all of this means that coastal batteries were hidden among indestructible granite rocks, they were placed in natural (or specially created by explosion) caves, protected by a multi-meter layer of fortification reinforced concrete, equipped with underground warehouses and shelters for personnel. As a result, a firing point appeared, which was almost impossible to suppress either by the fire of naval guns or by aerial bombardment. It was the highest security and invulnerability that turned the coastal battery (and this, as a rule, is only two or three or four guns) into a very significant element of the defensive system, which is of great tactical or even operational importance.

Russian, and then Soviet, naval science has accumulated vast, many years and centuries of experience in creating powerful coastal batteries. But at Hanko this experience was not in demand. Stationary coastal batteries on Hanko **did not even begin to build!** The explanations of this paradoxical fact found in Soviet historical or memoir literature (lack of building materials and workers, long construction periods) are completely absurd. Having killed 127 thousand fighters and commanders of the Red Army in three months of the "winter war", the Soviet

the leadership did not find the necessary number of builders for the arrangement of the very naval base of Hanko, for the mastery of which the war was waged? And when did Stalin's empire lack workers? Only in Karelia and only in the construction of railways in the annexed territories more than 100 thousand prisoners worked. If one hundred thousand was not enough, it was possible to bring another two hundred, three hundred or

five hundred thousand.

It is known for certain that in the so-called pre-war years, grandiose military construction was going on in the Soviet Union. On the "Molotov Line" along the new western border, it was planned to create 5807 permanent structures, of which by June 22, 1941, at least 1 thousand were completed. At 194 military airfields, concrete runways, underground concrete bomb storages for 300 tons and gasoline storage facilities for 225 tons were built (or reconstructed) for each airfield [128]. However, one can not argue about whether the Soviet Union had or did not have the necessary resources for the construction of coastal batteries in the waters of the Gulf of Finland. Coastal batteries were actually built: a super-powerful four-gun 16-inch (406 mm) battery in Estonia, 180 and 305 mm batteries on the Osmussar island, a 254-mm battery on the Russare island, a 180-mm battery on the island of Ezel (Svaremva) ... But not on Hanko.

The Naval Base (Naval Base) of Hanko turned out to be kind of strange. **Surface ships of the destroyer class and above have never been based on it.** In June 1941, the 1st brigade of torpedo boats and the 8th submarine division, which were previously based there, were also withdrawn from the Hanko naval base, after which only seven "small hunters of the protection of the water area" remained on Hanko, i.e., in fact, , 7 small patrol vessels [106].

The ground forces of this "sea" base were incomparably more powerful. The 8th separate rifle brigade was stationed on Hanko (two rifle and one artillery regiment, a separate tank battalion, two separate machine gun companies and other units). The 8th osb was formed on the basis of

units of the legendary 24th Iron Division - one of the best rifle formations of the Red Army (created during the Civil War under the command of Guy). As of January 1, 1941, the 8th OSB included 10,701 personnel, 513 horses, 886 vehicles, 219 tractors, 24 76 mm cannons and 24 howitzers (12-caliber 122 mm and 12 - caliber 152 mm) . 16 anti-tank 45 mm guns, 102 mortars, 113 heavy and 303 light machine guns. The tank battalion of the brigade was armed with 36 T-26 tanks and 13 T-37 amphibious tankettes [129]. Noteworthy is the unusually high level of motorization for the rifle units of the Red Army - every tenth fighter of the brigade was a vehicle driver, and 64 guns accounted for 219 tractors (tractors).

In addition to the 8th OSB, 4 separate construction battalions were deployed on Hanko. 2 sapper, 2 railway, 1 engineering battalion. These forces carried out a huge amount of military construction work: 190 bunkers (wood-and-earth firing point) were built; on the 4-kilometer isthmus connecting the peninsula of Hanko with the mainland of Finland, an anti-tank ditch was dug, reinforced with mine and wire barriers [133].

With the outbreak of war, another (219th) rifle regiment was formed from the personnel of construction and engineer units, and the decision to create *"stocks of rifles and machine guns for 5 thousand people for arming construction and rear units"* was made on June 15, 1941 [130]. There were also guns on the shore.

For anti-boat defense, 24 semi-automatic 45-mm 21K guns were installed. Taking into account the range of aimed fire of guns of this caliber, they could only cover a narrow river with artillery fire, but it was quite a formidable force to fight enemy landing craft. In addition, nine 130 mm and three 100 mm guns stood in open (!) shield installations with vents towards the Gulf of Finland. The main firepower of the Hanko garrison were two heavy railway batteries: No. 9 consisting of three guns of 305 mm caliber and

No. 17 consisting of 4 guns of 180 mm caliber [160]. Railway 12-inch (305 mm) artillery mounts "TM-3-12" rightfully bore the unofficial name "land battleship". A monstrous gun with a 17-meter-long barrel threw a projectile weighing 470 kg at a distance of 29 km. and the so-called "light long-range high-explosive projectile of the 1928 model" - at a distance of 44 km. At the same time, the weight of the "light" projectile was 314 kg (for comparison, we point out that the most massive Soviet aviation bombs of that time weighed 50 kg and 100 kg). Battery No. 9 alone, in terms of the weight of the total salvo, surpassed the entire artillery of the 8th OSB, together with coastal installations, combined. The composition of the three-gun 305-mm battery included 3 gun transporters, 6 platforms for shells and charges. 3 wagons-power stations and 1 wagon - fire control post. The huge, complex and extremely expensive complex of a heavy railway battery had one significant drawback - for use as a "coastal battery", i.e. for conducting an artillery duel with a heavy enemy surface ship, it was hardly

suitable. The bulky railway complex had no armor, was "open to all winds", and it was almost impossible to disguise the nine huge platforms standing on the track. There were practically no chances to survive in a battle against naval guns protected by the most powerful armor of the main caliber towers. The railroad battery was just as vulnerable against enemy air strikes. But she could move. On railroad tracks.

All of the above, in our opinion, is quite enough to understand what tasks the Hanko naval base was supposed to solve in a future war according to the plans of the Soviet command. Fortunately for historians, documents have been preserved in the archives that finally relieve us of the need to make any guesses. By the directive of the headquarters of the Leningrad Military District, the Hanko garrison was ordered:

*"General task:*

*1. Prevent the enemy from entering the peninsula both from the side of the land border, as well as from the sea.*

*2. Do not allow the landing of sea and air assault. 3. Ensure **the concentration and landing of suitable units** (underlined by me. - M.S.) in the port of Hanko "*[131]. The operational

plans of the high command of the Red Army (which will be discussed below) directly provided for the transfer of 1-2 rifle divisions to Khanko "in

the very first days of the war. To ensure such actions, a system of fortifications and armaments of the Hanko naval base was created. The 8th separate rifle (actually motorized) brigade was supposed to ensure the inviolability of the landing bridgehead, and then, together with the arriving units, move forward deep into Finland. Expensive railway batteries were driven to Hanko not at all by chance or by mistake - with the fire of powerful guns they were supposed to wipe out Finnish fortifications from the face of the earth, destroy the port and city of Helsinki. The experience of military operations against the

"White Finnish military" at the railway battery No. 9 already was. On January 26, 1940, the battery arrived on the Karelian Isthmus, where it entered the operational subordination of the chief of artillery of the 7th Army of the Northwestern Front. From February 11 to February 25, battery No. 9 fired 165 heavy high-explosive shells at the railway station and the city of Vyborg [132]. *"Look at Vyborg - nothing is left of it. The city is completely destroyed,"* commander Ptukhin, commander of the Air Force of the North-Western Front, proudly reported at the April (1940) Meeting of the High Command of the Red Army [20]. "Land battleships" made their contribution to these destructions.

One can argue for a long time about whether such use of the Hanko Peninsula was in accordance with Article 4 of the Moscow Treaty of March 12, 1940, according to which the peninsula was leased to the Soviet Union on very specific conditions, namely: "To create a naval base *there*, capable of **defending the entrance to the Gulf of Finland from aggression** (emphasized by me. - M.S.)". The Moscow treaty, which had the official title of "peace treaty", by no means provided for the right to create bridgeheads for future aggression. On the other hand, it is absolutely indisputable that the mentioned agreement did not contain any mention of granting the Soviet Union the right to transit military (and any other) cargo along the railways of southern Finland from Vyborg to Hanko. Article 6 of the peace treaty granted *"the Soviet Union and its citizens the right of free transit through the Petsamo region to Norway and back"*, as well as the right of free flight to Norway for *"unarmed aircraft"*. Article 7 spoke of *"the transit of goods between the USSR and Sweden"*. About the transit of weapons and military units through the territory of Finland (in particular, in Hanko), the contract did not say anything.

words.

In July 1940, Molotov demanded that the rights of the Soviet Union be extended unilaterally and that **it be given the opportunity to transit military cargoes to Hanko**. From a formal legal point of view, the uncontrolled transit of military cargo and armed persons already made it possible to cast doubt on the neutral and sovereign status of the Finnish state. From a practical point of view, the granting of the right of transit meant the appearance at the Hanko naval base of heavy weapons systems that would be difficult to deliver by sea (this is how the railway artillery installations appeared at Hanko), as well as additional opportunities for conducting military intelligence in the southern, most densely populated and industrial developed region of Finland. Clearly understanding all this, the Finnish government nevertheless agreed to transit - in the summer of 1940, it actually

had no other alternatives, except for more and more concessions in the face of an increasingly frank dictate. July 22, 1940

the corresponding agreement was signed. *"When the USSR in July 1940 demanded the right to operate Russian trains from the border to Hanko,"* Mannerheim writes in his memoirs, *"after long and hard negotiations, in which we achieved some concessions, we agreed to this. Such a through passage of trains through the entire southern part of Finland could, of course, lead to its use for bad purposes, and we had to worry about the safety of the most important railway junctions and bridges"* [22].

In the same July 1940, Molotov made another demand to the Finns, which was in no way based on the spirit and letter of the Moscow Treaty. In an explicit form, this agreement did not provide for any restrictions on the construction of defensive structures in the border zone. Judging by Pvasikivi's memoirs, during the negotiations themselves, Molotov told the Finnish representatives: *"Build as many fortifications as you want, we have no demands on that issue"* [103]. In fact, in 1940-1941, on the Soviet side, three new fortified areas were being built (Vyborgsky, Keksholmsky and Sortavalsky), new airfields were being built (Mannerheim claims that during the offensive in the summer of 1941, the Finns found 90 airfields ready and under construction in a 200-kilometer strip along the new Finnish border) and leading railroads and highways to the border. All this did not prevent Molotov **from demanding an end to all defensive construction on the Finnish side**, including in the area of the Hanko Peninsula [103]. As far as can be judged from the available sources, this requirement was not fully met, and the construction of a line of fortifications in the strip from the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland to the wave of the Saimensky lakes system (from Kotka to Lappeenranta) continued. Nevertheless, Moscow's demand to stop defensive construction in the Vyborg-Helsinki and Hanko-Helsinki directions is quite remarkable in itself.

Somewhat earlier, on June 2, 1940, the Soviet Union demanded from Finland **the "return" of all movable and immovable property**, public and private, which, according to Soviet representatives, was in the annexed Finnish territories at the time the "winter war" began. It is impossible to find even the slightest grounds for such demands in the text of the Moscow Peace Treaty - the question of property, buildings and structures located in the territories transferred to the Soviet Union is not mentioned there at all. And in any case, they were deprived of any reasonable and legal basis for the demand for the "return" of movable property, which, by definition, cannot belong to a certain territory. Nevertheless, Moscow insisted on its illegal demands, and Finland lost, among other things, 75 locomotives and 2,000 wagons - a very sensitive blow to the already weakened transport system by the war.

The next link in the chain of ever-increasing political pressure was **the demand for the resignation of the Minister of Supply V. Tanner**, who probably "remembered" Molotov for his uncompromising position during the negotiations in Moscow in the autumn of 1939. It is hardly necessary to prove that the terms of the peace treaty of March 12, 1940 did not provide for Moscow's right to appoint and dismiss ministers of the Finnish government. However, in July 1940, Finland was forced to comply with this demand.

On June 14, 1940, the "cold war" between the USSR and Finland was for a moment supplemented by a real war - with human casualties, the participation of combat aircraft and ships. On this day, a Junkers-52 **passenger plane of the Finnish airline Aero was shot down in the air**, performing a regular flight from Tallinn to Helsinki. At 1354 hours, the plane with the tail number "OH-ALI" and the name "Kaleva" on board took off from the Tallinn airfield. On board were two crew members and seven passengers, among whom were two employees of the French Embassy and a diplomat from the United States. 12 minutes after takeoff, radio contact with the aircraft was suddenly interrupted. A few minutes later, the control tower of the Malmi airfield (Helsinki) received a message that the observation posts on the island of Santahamina had seen a burning plane that had crashed into the waters of the Gulf of Finland. At 14.51, a Finnish Air

Force fighter on duty took off from Malmi Airport to the crash site. It so happened that Ilmari Juutilainen was in his cockpit, a pilot who was to become the most productive ace fighter of all countries participating in World War II (with the exception of Germany). In the area of Keri Island (33 km north of Tallinn), Juutilainen discovered a Soviet submarine drifting on the surface, next to which the wreckage of an aircraft and a large oil slick were floating in the wild. During June 14-15, 1940, Soviet seaplanes and ships patrolled the Kalev crash site and, having collected all floating objects, left for Kronstadt [52]. The Government of Finland, which has been following the events unfolding in Estonia with increasing anxiety, again considered it best not to protest and not demand compensation for the damage. This is all that is known for sure. The Soviet government **did not recognize its responsibility and did not even offer a formal apology** in connection with the

tragic death of the passengers of the Kalev. Moreover, two days later, on June 16, 1940, exactly the same passenger Junkers-52 (though this time of an Estonian airline), making a regular flight along the same route from Helsinki to Tallinn, was fired upon by an anti-aircraft machine gun of a Soviet submarine boat, but, fortunately, was not damaged [52]. The specific details of the destruction of the Kalev are not exactly known: according to some reports, it was shot down by a pair of Soviet fighters, according to others, by a pair of SB light bombers. Many years later, the well-known long-range aviation navigator, Lieutenant General P.I. Khokhlov.

In his book, the events are described as follows: *"The working people of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia threw off the hated bourgeois regimes, gained freedom. Based on the free expression of the will of their peoples, they became part of the USSR as equal socialist republics. The representatives of the exploiting class, overthrown in these countries, together with their foreign partners, tried to ship the stolen capital across the ocean. Warships, as well as aircraft of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet, were ordered to close the uncontrolled exit of foreign ships and the departure of foreign aircraft from the seaports and airfields of the Baltic republics. This task was also carried out by our 1st MTAP (Mine Torpedo Aviation Regiment)*

*On June 23, 1940, two of our crews, led by the commander of the air regiment, Colonel Sh.B. Bedzinashvili flew out to reconnaissance in the northwestern part of the Baltic Sea. The leading crew consisted of the regiment commander, myself, the navigator and gunner-radio operator sergeant Kazunov... About three or four kilometers from the city [Tallinn] , I noticed how a plane took off from the Lagsberg airfield. He takes a course*

*towards Helsinki. - To intercept! - Colonel Bedzinashvili gives the order, - Probably out of control, we need to turn it back. We are*

*approaching the Yu-52 aircraft without any identification marks. I opened the astro hatch of my cockpit, got up and showed the pilot with my hand to turn the car in the direction of the airfield. But the "Junkers" flies the same course, and even increases speed. We crossed his course twice, gave signs "We demand to return!" The unknown crew ignored our demands. "Warn with fire," the commander*

*transmits. Several tracer bursts pass in front of the Junkers cabin, but this does not change things either. We are so close to the pursued aircraft that through its windows we see passengers in a crowded cabin, their self-satisfied faces. We are shown fists, threatened with pistols. After that, the intruder was shot down. ... In the fuselage raised from the bottom of the bay, they found*

*not only a lot of material values. but also a large number of documents constituting state secrets ... We understood why the crew of the Yu-52 refused to obey the demand to return to the airfield: they would have to pay for espionage ... "[134] . The above text is unique in its degree of false bias. As is known, the working people of Estonia "gained freedom" and*

*"became part of the USSR on the basis of free expression of will" on August 6, 1940. As of June 14, 1940, Estonia was not one of the "equal socialist republics", but a sovereign state, the government of which **at that time, Molotov's ultimatum was not even presented** (this happened two days later, on June 16). Probably, this is precisely why the author of the text "transferred" the date of the destruction of the Kalev from June 14 to June 23, although this does not change anything in the legal assessment of the situation (according to the mind, it should have been "transferred" to any date after August 6).*

On June 14, 1940, the Soviet command did not yet have the slightest legal grounds to prevent the "uncontrolled departure of foreign aircraft" from the territory of Estonia foreign to the USSR, and the diplomatic documents and "looted capital" seized by armed means belonged to Estonia and its citizens. As for "espionage", and even aggravated by an armed robbery, it was by no means the crew of a Finnish passenger plane who was engaged in it that day ...

On the fuselage and wings of the downed Junkers (which is clearly visible in the surviving photographs), the tail number "OH-ALL" was inscribed in huge letters, and the state flag of Finland was clearly depicted on the fin. The arguments that the passengers threatened to shoot down a long-range bomber with pistols from the closed cockpit of a passenger plane generally make us assume that this text was not written by an aviation lieutenant general, but by the notorious "litconsultants" ...

With all this, this fragment from typical Soviet "memoirs" gives a clear idea of the state of intoxication with permissiveness and impunity, in which the command of the Red Army was in the summer of 1940. Of course, the naval commanders were in no way inferior in their capless and capricious moods to the land and aviation colleagues. So, the chief of staff of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (KBF), Rear Admiral Yu.A. Panteleev, in a memorandum to the Main Naval Staff, suggested the following on July 5, 1940: "... *the capture of the Aland Islands in all cases of the situation in the Baltic and immediately ... year, get the Aland Islands and the possibility of real control over all Finnish bases in the Gulf of Finland by any means - up to war.* Rear Admiral N.N., commander of the KBF squadron, did not lag behind the senior commander. Nesvitsky. On July 10, he sent a memorandum to the Main Naval Headquarters with a proposal to **"resolve the issue of the independent existence of Sweden and Finland in favor of the USSR** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *and make the Baltic Sea an inland sea"* [138, 232].

The question of "the independent existence of Sweden and Finland" was already quite concrete. In September 1940, the Commander of the KBF Air Force, Major General Yermachenkov, presented the Commander of the KBF, Vice Admiral Tributs, with a "Note on the plan of operations for 1940." The tasks of the fleet aviation were formulated as follows: "1. By

*independent actions of combat aviation of the KBF Air Force and the PribOVO Air Force, destroy ships and TR at sea and prevent the enemy fleet from being based in: Stockholm, Karlskrona, Norrköping, Fore, Helsinki, Abo, Raumo, Pori, Memel, Danzig, Gdynia, Zaenets, Steting, Kiel* (Baltic ports of Sweden, Finland, occupied Poland, Germany. - M.S.) ... 4. *In cooperation with the fleet, it ensures **the capture of***

***the Aland Islands*** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *through air strikes and airborne landings, specially attached Air Force KBF landing units of the Air Force of the Red Army ... "* [236]. From the beginning of the 90s, after the publication of many such documents made it completely

indecent to repeat the old fables about the "quiet, peaceful and defenseless" Stalinist empire, the keepers of the communist propaganda myths launched a new record: supposedly all these offensive plans were developed in the form of a purely hypothetical "projects", almost in their spare time. Alas, the bold hypothesis about Soviet generals and admirals drawing red arrows on maps in their free time from work and friendly tea parties is not supported by the facts. On the contrary, documents and facts testify that preparations (including reconnaissance) for the implementation of plans for the invasion of Europe were carried out day and night. *"The reconnaissance plan of the KBF Air Force from 1.06.40 to 11.12.40 ... Reconnaissance object: aerial photographic reconnaissance of the ports of the Gulf of Bothnia: Vaaza, Kristanstadt, Gefle,*

*Aland Islands. Purpose: to clarify objects of defense significance ... Means: 10th air brigade, 73rd air regiment ...*

*... Reconnaissance object: coastal and anti-aircraft artillery in Stockholm, Karlskrona, the island of Gotland, as well as the 1st artillery regiment of Finland. Purpose: to clarify the location of firing points, access roads to them and service buildings ...*



*Means: 10th ab, 8th about, 15th and 73rd air regiments ...*

*Beginning. Headquarters of the KBF Air Force, Colonel Surkov, head. reconnaissance department captain*

*Semishin " [141]. "To the head of the 2nd department of the First Department of the Naval Aviation Headquarters,*

*Major Klimashin. I report on the state of reconnaissance training of the Headquarters of the KBF Air Force*

*on August 1, 1940 ... Target cases continue to start and are replenished with incoming material, in particular, the Stockholm object has been multiplied in 20 copies. and sent out piecemeal. The objects Kalmar and Karlskrone are being developed. In total, the Air Force has opened: 270 cases of targets, of which 91 in Sweden, 90 in Germany, and 36 in Finland. intelligence department of the*

*headquarters of the Air Force of the KBF captain Semishin " [142]. Head of the intelligence department of the headquarters of the KBF Air Force. Ha No. 1/668s dated August 14, 1940 "...by September 1, 1940, report on the purposes for which the cases in Finland were drawn up. Sweden and whether all regiments have them. At the same time, tell us whether you received the object "Stockholm" from the intelligence department of the Red*

*Banner Baltic Fleet and what shortcomings it has. Speed up the processing of cases in order to complete them as soon as possible. Chief of the 2nd Department of the First Department of the Naval Aviation Headquarters, Major Klimashin" [143].*

Marshal Mannerheim - as far as one can judge from his memoirs - had practically no doubt that Finland was on the verge of a new war : *and before the beginning of the Winter War, the number of violations of the border by aircraft increased dangerously ... The confessions of all the Bolshevik agents, without exception, detained by us, testified that preparations for the war against Finland were in full swing. The data of the Finnish counterintelligence spoke about this even more accurately. In August 1940, one colonel and two majors, who were preparing scouts for being sent to Finland, said: "Finland is a capitalist country that will face the same fate as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The incorporation of Finland into the USSR is a matter of several weeks, at most, several months ... "" [22].*

Even more remarkable is the fact that German intelligence did not doubt the imminent war. On August 13, 1940, **considering the imminent takeover of Finland by the Soviet Union as a matter already decided**, Hitler ordered the preparation of an operation code-named "Renitier" [65]. The idea was to capture the Finnish nickel mines in Petsamo on the eve (or already during) the Soviet invasion, for which a strike was planned from northern Norway by the forces of two Wehrmacht mountain rifle divisions (later this private operation was implemented, but on a much larger scale, in the summer 1941) Today, on the

basis of authentic documents of the Soviet military command, we can firmly state that both Mannerheim and Hitler were wrong in their predictions. **There was no operational deployment of the Red Army troops for military operations in the northern theater of operations in the autumn of 1940.** document. allowing to make such a peremptory statement is, in our opinion, the Report of the Chief

department of operational flights of the headquarters of the Air Force of the Red Army, Colonel Mironov, dated December

2, 1940 [136]. The report provides generalized and systematized information about all major regroupings of the Red Army Air Force units carried out in 1940. And insofar as the preparation and conduct of a strategic offensive operation in World War II was no longer possible without the involvement of significant aviation forces, the report of Colonel Mironov can be considered, although implicit, but an exhaustive "report" on the plans and actions of the USSR Armed Forces in 1940. Familiarity with the contents of the Report shows that during 1940 there were four episodes of major strategic air regroupings:

1. January-February. 29 air regiments were relocated to the Leningrad Military District and to the air bases of the Soviet Union in Estonia (hereinafter, separate air squadrons and tactical reconnaissance squadrons attached to rifle corps will not be mentioned). In March, 29 air regiments were returned to their places of permanent deployment. The meaning of this regrouping is quite obvious - this is the "winter war" and the strengthening of the Soviet aviation grouping in the theater associated with it. The war ended, and all 29 regiments returned to their places. 2. April. 6 air

regiments were relocated to the Transcaucasian Military District (all regiments are bomber regiments). There they remained. It can be assumed that the strengthening of the Soviet Air Force grouping in Transcaucasia was associated with the extreme aggravation of relations between the USSR and the Anglo-French bloc. emerging in the spring of 1940. From the Transcaucasian airfields, Soviet bombers could strike at British and French military targets in Iran and Iraq. Syria.

3. May-June. 14 air regiments (including 10 bomber regiments) were relocated to the Odessa Military District. Then, also in June, three regiments returned to the place of permanent deployment. The content of the event is quite clear. This is preparation for a possible armed conflict with Romania, and then the creation of a large aviation group in the newly acquired territory of Bessarabia (Moldova).

4. June. *"To the state borders of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia"* (as in the text. - M.S.) the 21st air regiment was deployed. In

the same month, 11 air regiments returned to their places of permanent deployment. And in this case, everything is clear - before us is preparation for the occupation of the Baltic states, and then the creation of an aviation group as part of the new Baltic Special Military District.

That's all. No other major regroupings of aviation in 1940 were recorded. With a probability close to 100%, this means that the occupation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia was the last strategic offensive operation of 1940. **Preparations for the invasion of Finland did not pass in 1940 into the stage of practical measures for the operational deployment of troops.**

## Chapter

### 2.4 "INVADE, DESTROY AND CONQUER..."

The conclusion we arrived at at the end of the previous chapter is by no means trivial. The concentration of ground and air forces, the rapid deployment of a group of troops and the subsequent invasion would be a completely logical conclusion to the "pressing" of Finland that lasted all summer. But this did not happen, although **the plans for the "Finnish campaign" were developed and refined at least throughout the autumn of 1940.** Chronologically,

the first among the available documents of strategic planning in 1940 is the memorandum of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks I.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov "On the fundamentals of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the West and in the East", w / n, signed no later than August 16, 1940 (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 239, pp. 1-37). In parentheses, we note that Fund 16 of the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, which stores this and other documents of military planning, which will be discussed in this chapter, has not yet been declassified, which means that no one, except for biased "historians from Glavpur", according to still unavailable. In other words, for more than 10 years there has been a completely crazy situation when a number of military-historical documents have been published, but not declassified! As a result, we can neither check the conformity of the published texts with the original documents, nor fill in the fragments possibly "forgotten" by the publishers, nor, most importantly, find other similar documents. It is impossible to call such a situation otherwise than a "theater of the absurd", but, for lack of a better one, v

The document of August 16 was drawn up by Vasilevsky, signed by Timoshenko and Shaposhnikov. The authors of the memorandum state that *"the Soviet Union needs to be ready to fight on two fronts: in the West against Germany, supported by Italy, Finland and Romania, and possibly Turkey, and in the East against Japan"* [120]. At the same time, it is indicated that Finland can field up to 15 rifle divisions and 400 aircraft.

The main events, according to the plan of the high command of the Red Army, should take place in the west: *"The main task of our troops is to defeat the German forces concentrating in East Prussia and in the Warsaw region; with an auxiliary strike to defeat the enemy grouping in the area of Ivangorod, Lublin, Grubeshov, Tomashev, Sandomierz (southern Poland. - M.S.)"* [120]. The northwestern (Finnish) direction, within the framework of the goals and objectives of this plan, is considered only as one of the secondary ones: *"... Strategic deployment in the north-west of our borders is subordinated primarily to the defense of Leningrad, covering the Murmansk railway and keeping us full dominance in Finnish bay.*

***The entry into the war of Finland alone is unlikely*** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), *the most real case is the simultaneous participation in the war of Finland with Germany. Considering the possible correlation of forces, our actions in the northwest should be reduced to the active defense of our borders"* [120].

On August 16, 1940, Marshal Shaposhnikov was replaced as Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army by Army

General Meretskov. On September 18, signed by Tymoshenko and Meretskov (performed by Vasilevsky), two new documents are issued. One of them: memorandum No. 103202 / ov of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks I.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov "On the fundamentals of the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the West and in the East" (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 239, l. 197-244). Both in name and, to a large extent, in content, this document repeated the strategic deployment plan of August 16, 1940. In relation to the northwestern direction, the goals and objectives were repeated literally word for word. The only change was a slight increase in the composition of the grouping of Soviet troops on the Finnish border - from 11 rifle divisions, 2 rifle and 3 tank brigades to 13 rifle divisions, 2 rifle and 3 tank brigades [120].

As part of the plan for a big war with Germany (on the territory of "former Poland" and East Prussia), the Finnish direction remained a secondary passive area. On the same day, September

18, 1940, with the same awe-inspiring inscriptions ("Special importance. Top secret. Only in person. The only copy"), Timoshenko and Meretskov sent memorandum No. 103203 to Stalin and Molotov - "Considerations for the deployment Armed Forces of the Red Army in case of war with Finland" (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 237, l. 138-156).

This time, **the most decisive considerations were expressed about the fate of Finland.** "...

*with a strike by the main forces of the Northwestern Front through Savonlinna to San Michel (Mikkeli) and through Lappeenranta to Heinola, bypassing the fortifications created in the Helsingfors direction, and with a simultaneous strike from Vyborg through Sippola to Helsingfors (Helsinki), invade central Finland, defeat here the main forces of the Finnish army and take possession of the central part of Finland. This strike should be combined with an attack on Helsingfors from the side of the Hanko Peninsula and with the actions of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in the Gulf of Finland" [120].*

Immediately, we note that the words "German", "Germanic" do not occur in any case in this document. "Invade, defeat and capture" was supposed to **be without any connection** with the actual (or at least expected) presence of German troops in Finland! To implement the concept of the operation, it was planned to include four armies in the North-Western Front, which were assigned the following tasks (see map No. 4):

*area of Kuopio. In the future, keep in mind the actions on Jyväskylä";*

- 22nd Army (headquarters - Kexholm, troops were deployed along the northwestern shore of Lake Ladoga) *"to capture San Michel with a strike through Savonlinna. In the future, depending on the situation, keep in mind actions - either jointly with the 23rd Army on Heinola, or in cooperation with the 7th Army on Jyväskylä and further on Tampere ";* - 23rd Army

(headquarters - Karisalmi, 30 km northeast of Vyborg) *"through Lappeenranta to strike at Heinola and take possession of the latter ";*

- 20th Army (headquarters - Vyborg) *"break through the enemy fortifications and go to the front of Kouvola, Kotka; in the future, in cooperation with the 23rd Army and the offensive from Hanko, strike at Helsingfors "* [120]. Two armies (7th and 23rd) were

already part of the Leningrad Military District in peacetime. The other two (22nd and 20th) were supposed to be created on the basis of formations and headquarters, respectively, of the Ural and Oryol military districts. The idea of access to the Gulf of

Bothnia and the border with Sweden in the Kem-Oulu region, which was constantly present in the operational plans of the Soviet-Finnish wars, was not forgotten either (see map No. 5). For actions in northern Karelia, another front was created (Northern Front), which was given the following tasks:

*"... by decisive actions in the directions of Rovaniemi-Kemi and Uleaborg (Oulu) to reach the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, cut off northern Finland and interrupt land communications of central Finland with Sweden and Norway ..."* [120]. The composition of the Northern Front

(created on the basis of the command and headquarters of the Arkhangelsk Military District) included two armies (14th and 21st) and a separate 20th rifle corps. The 14th (Murmansk) army was given the same task that it had successfully accomplished during the "winter war" - the capture of the port and nickel mines of Petsamo. The 21st Army (deployed on the basis of the command and headquarters of the Volga Military District) solved the main task of the front: "to strike in the direction of Rovaniemi-Kem, reach the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia and capture the Kem region. In the future, keep in mind the actions on Uleaborg. The 20th separate rifle corps (Moscow Military District), advancing along the forest impassability, was supposed to deliver an auxiliary strike along the shortest path from Ukhta to Oulu. The general composition of the planned grouping of troops of the

Northern and North-Western fronts is presented in the following table:

	20th	23rd	22nd	7th	20th	21st	14th	Total
rifle divisions	6	6	5	6	3		9	38
tank brigades	1	1	1	0	0		0	3
artillery regiments RGK 4 9		6	2	0	0		0	13
aviation regiments		13	5	7	0		4	42

But even these very impressive forces did not exhaust the military power that was to fall on Finland. In addition to the above armies, the following were transferred to the command of the North-Western Front:

*"1. On the northwestern coast of the Estonian SSR in the region of Tallinn, the port of Baltiysky - 2 rifle divisions (11th, 126th. PribOVO), of which one is intended for operations **from the Hanko Peninsula to Helsingfors** (emphasized by me. - M.S. ) and the second, depending on the situation, or for actions to capture the Aland Islands (at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia), or it can be transferred by rail. road to the main theater of the front.*

*2. 3 rifle divisions in the area of st. Petijärvi, st. Heinioki, Valkyarvi (east of Vyborg). 3. 1 rifle division - in the*

*Leningrad region. 4. Tank corps in the Vyborg-*

*Heinioki area, consisting of 2 tank and 1 motorized rifle divisions" [120].*

In addition, along with aviation subordinate to the command of the armies, 15 and 21 (these are not numbers, this is the number!) Aviation regiments were transferred directly to the command of the commanders of the Northern and North-Western fronts, respectively. Thus, **46 rifle divisions, 78 air regiments, 13 RGK artillery regiments, 3 tank brigades and one mechanized (tank) corps were to be deployed in the theater of the future Finnish war.** The total number of aircraft involved in the operation, the authors of the "considerations" determined at 3900 units [120]. Which is **one and a half times more than it was on the morning of June 22, 1941**, as part of all three Luftwaffe Air Fleets, concentrated on the Eastern Front ...

But that's not all. *"In the reserve of the High Command, to have in the Tikhvin-Volkhovstroy-Chudovo area - 2 rifle divisions."* And also *"to prepare and have in the reserve of the High Command at the points of permanent deployment seven rifle divisions from the Western and Kiev military districts, and a total of 14 divisions"* [120].

The Red Banner Baltic Fleet was once again tasked with *"destroying the Finnish battle fleet, interrupting Finnish maritime communications in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland ..."*. A new moment was the requirement *"to ensure the possible transfer of 1-2 rifle divisions to the Hanko Peninsula."*

The plan of September 18, 1940 differs in many respects from the plan of the *"operation to defeat the land and sea forces of the Finnish army"*, signed by Meretskoy on October 29, 1939. The first thing that immediately catches your eye is a **radical increase in the planned size** of the group of Red Army troops. The number of rifle divisions more than doubled (from 21 to 46), artillery regiments of the RGK almost doubled (from 7 to 13), and the number of aircraft involved in the operation increased two and a half times (from 1,581 to 3,900 combat aircraft). The grouping of troops with the task of "cutting" the territory of Finland and reaching Oulu-Kemi increased six times (compared to the "winter war" plan). It is also worth noting that, in accordance with the big plan signed on the same day, September 18, 1940, *"to conduct operations in the West"*, "only" 146 rifle divisions and 159 aviation regiments were assigned, *"having 6422 aircraft on September 15"* [120]. In other words, the forces planned for the war with Finland were: in terms of the number of rifle divisions - one third, in terms of the number of air regiments and aircraft - half of the forces that were supposed to be deployed for the war with the incomparably more powerful and numerous army of Germany and its southern allies (Romania, Hungary).

Large forces corresponded to the new tasks, this time formulated with the utmost clarity. If in the plan of October 29, 1939, the depth of the offensive of the main grouping of the Red Army troops was determined only by reaching the Vyborg-Sortavala line (after which one should *"be ready for further actions inland according to the situation"*), then **the plan of September 18, 1940 unequivocally required "take control of the central part of Finland" and its capital.** Another significant

difference in the plans of 1939 and 1940. becomes obvious if you look at the geographical map of the area of future hostilities. Red arrows are lost among a continuous scattering of blue marks of lakes. The routes of advance of the troops of the 7th, 22nd and 23rd armies run through the largest lake region in Europe (the Saimaa lake system). The free space between the "blue eyes of the lakes" is occupied by dense forests and swamps. Such is the price of the decision taken in September 1940 to deliver the main blow *"bypassing the*

*Helsingfors direction of fortifications.* Apparently, the sad experience of breaking through the "Mannerheim Line" with bloody frontal attacks led to the fact that the developers of the plan (i.e. the main "generals of the winter war" Timoshenko and Meretskov), "burned in milk, began to blow on the water."

The question of whether the hastily constructed Finnish fortifications along the Kotka-Lappeenranta, Kotka-Kovola line presented a barrier so strong that the risk of large possible losses during their breakthrough justified the transfer of the direction of the main attack to the forest thicket, is debatable. With much greater certainty, it can be assumed that it was the decision to strike through the lake-forest region that determined the "negligible" (by Soviet standards, "small") number of tanks allocated for the operation. On September 15, 1940, there were 17.6 thousand tanks in the Red Army (and this is not counting 5.8 thousand T-27, T-37, T-38 tankettes). In the Leningrad Military District alone, there were 2766 tanks (again, not counting machine-gun tankettes) [34]. And for the proposed war against Finland, only 785 tanks were involved in the composition of 3 tank brigades (out of more than 26 that were part of the

Red Army) [120]. In the text of "Considerations on the deployment of the Armed Forces of the Red Army in the event of a war with Finland" dated September 18, 1940, there is not the slightest mention of a possible date for the start of this war.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the operational plan and the structure of the grouping of troops allows us to formulate **the hypothesis that another "winter war" was planned.** Strictly speaking, to the question of what time of the year in the region of the Saimaa lake system it is better to conduct a major offensive operation, one should answer: "It is always worse." In winter - deep snow and frost, short daylight hours, which sharply limits the combat capabilities of aviation. In the summer - marshy impassability and clouds of blood-sucking midges. Nevertheless, winter, by binding the surface of lakes and marshes with a hard shell of ice, significantly increases the cross-country ability and, consequently, the possibility for tactical and operational maneuver. For the grouping that emerges from September considerations (infantry with a minimum number of tanks, supported by very large air forces), winter is still somewhat preferable.

Such a conclusion may seem paradoxical, but only against the background of walking legends about "40-degree frost" and "two-meter snow cover" that prevented the Red Army from "liberating" Finland in December

1939. Winter in southern Finland (as in all coastal regions of Europe) is quite mild (by our, Russian, standards). According to the results of long-term meteorological observations, the average January temperature in Helsinki is 2.7 degrees below zero, and in general in the southern regions of the country - from 3 to 7 degrees. The severe frosts of the winter of 1939/1940 were a unique natural anomaly, unprecedented in the previous hundred years. But even in that incredible winter, the air temperature on the Karelian Isthmus in December 1939 never dropped below 23 degrees. It is cold, but for a

young man dressed in a sheepskin coat, it is not fatal. 40-degree frosts really came in January-February 1940, but not in the southern, but in the central and northern parts of Finland, which both geographically and climatically represent, in fact, "another country". As for the "two-meter snow", as every Russian knows, it appears (if it appears) closer to

February-March, but not at the beginning of winter. In fact, every year, every winter, there is a fairly long period of time when the ground is already frozen, the pound roads have become like stone, and the snow has not yet reached the knee. Finally, Russians, Finns, Swedes and other peoples of northern Europe have long invented sleds, sleds and skis to move around the virgin snow.

In any case, the main commander to the idea of warfare in winter  
treated quite positively.

On April 16, 1940, at the evening meeting of the Meeting of the High Command of the Red Army, Comrade Stalin sharply condemned "individual comrades" who allowed doubts about the possibility of fighting in the winter: " ... it is said] *that winter conditions worsen the situation of the war, while all the serious, decisive successes of the Russian army unfolded precisely in winter conditions, starting with the battles of Alexander Nevsky and ending with the defeat of Napoleon. It was in winter conditions that our troops prevailed, because they were more enduring and winter conditions did not constitute any difficulties for them. Having so many examples, how can one teach the reader such nonsense that winter conditions lower the combat effectiveness of the army ...* " [20]. If our hypothesis is correct and a new war against Finland was planned for the winter of 1940/1941, then this

already explains why the pressure and destabilization campaign launched in the summer did not develop into real hostilities.

Stalin was just waiting for a light frost. However, let's repeat this once again, the "winter orientation" of the plan for the war with Finland, drawn up on September 18, 1940, is just a hypothesis that does not have (due to the secrecy of information) direct documentary evidence.

The "considerations" signed on September 18 ended with the standard phrase for such documents: *"Reporting the basis of our operational deployment against Finland, I ask for their consideration."* On October 5, 1940, this and a number of other strategic military planning documents were reviewed and approved by Stalin. We come to this conclusion on the basis of the memorandum of Timoshenko and Meretskov No. 103313 (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 242, l. 84-90). This document began with a very strange phrase from the point of view of ordinary common sense: *"I report for your approval the main conclusions from your instructions given on October 5, 1940."* [120]. In other words, the People's Commissar for Defense asked Stalin to confirm in writing that he (Tymoshenko) understood him (Stalin) correctly. Without digressing further into the logical impasse of this situation, let's go straight to paragraph 7 of the memorandum: *"Approve the submitted considerations for the development of private deployment plans for military operations against Finland, against Romania and against Turkey"* [120]. The plans for "military operations against Romania and against Turkey", unfortunately,

have not yet been declassified. As for the war against Finland, preparations for it continued, as clearly evidenced by a new document that appeared two months later: "Directive of the NPO of the USSR and the General Staff of the Red Army to the commander of the Leningrad Military District", b / n, dated November 25, 1940 (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, file 237, sheets 118-130).



Both in title, and in purpose, and in terms of addressee, it was a document of a different rank than the "considerations" of September 18. The directive of November 25 is an order from a higher command to subordinates, which order, of course, began and ended not with a "request for consideration", but with specific instructions:

*"I order to start developing a plan for the operational deployment of troops Northwestern Front...*

*... Assign the code name "S.Z. - 20" to this deployment plan. The plan is put into effect upon receipt of an encrypted telegram signed by me and the Chief of the General Staff of the spacecraft as follows. "Proceed to carry out S.Z.-20." By February 15, 1941 (emphasized by me. -*

*M.S.), the Military Council and the headquarters of the Leningrad Military District should develop in the General Staff of the Red Army: a) a plan for the concentration and deployment of front troops; b) a cover plan. c) Plan for the execution of the first operation. d) Aviation Action Plan..." [120].*

And then five more private plans, together forming a completely completed plan for the operational deployment of the troops of the front (not a "district", we note, but a "front"! ). The

concept of the operation, the goals and objectives of the troops, the stages and frontiers of advance remained practically unchanged (in comparison with the "Considerations" of September 18), but became more definite, since the "directive" of November 25 already included specific deadlines for the "final solution" of the Finnish question

*"... I set the main tasks for the North-Western Front: the defeat of the armed forces of Finland, the capture of its territory within the boundaries (meaning the demarcation with the Northern Front, operating in central and northern Finland. - M.S.) and access to the Gulf of Bothnia at 45 day of operation, for which:*

*... after concentrating troops, be ready on the 35th day of mobilization, on special instructions, to go on the general offensive, deliver the main blow in the general direction to Lappeenranta, Heinola, Hämeenlinna and auxiliary blows in the directions of Korpiselkä-Kuopio and Savonlinna-Mikkeli, defeat the main forces of the Finnish army in the area of Mikkeli, Heinola, Hamina, on the 35th day of the operation, capture Helsingfors (here and above it is emphasized by me. - M.S.) and reach the front of Kuopio, Jyväskylä, Hämeenlinna, Helsingfors.*

*... On the right, the Northern Front (Kandalaksha headquarters) on the 40th day of mobilization goes on the offensive and on the 30th day of the operation, capturing the Kemi, Uleaborg*

*(Oulu) region " [120]. Even more specific was the idea of the enemy. If in the September "Considerations" nothing was said about the possibility of joint actions of the German and Finnish troops, then the directive of November 25 directly began with the words: " In the conditions of the war of the USSR, only against Finland (emphasized by me - M.S.) for ease of control and two fronts are being created to provide the material support for the troops ... " There was no longer any talk of any "ensuring the security of Leningrad", nothing was said about repelling "Nazi aggression" (Soviet historiography came up with this*

*thesis much later). The Northwestern Front included the same four armies (20th, 23rd, 22nd and 7th) with the same deployment areas and offensive routes as*

September plan. The total number of rifle divisions and aviation regiments, the composition and location of front reserves (four rifle divisions, one mechanized corps and 21 air regiments) remained unchanged. The only innovation was a noticeable increase in the number of tank and motorized brigades and heavy artillery regiments of the RGK involved in the operation:

	20th A	23rd A	22nd A	7th A	Total
rifle divisions, tank	6/6	6/6	5/5	6/6	23/23
and motorized. brigades	1/3	1/3	1/2	0/1	3/9
artillery regiments RGK	4/5	9/9	6/6	2/3	0/2 12/19
aviation regiments		13/11	5/7	7/7	34/34

Note. The first digit is the "considerations" of 18 September, the second digit is the directive of 25 November.

The tasks of the mechanized corps, allocated in front command reserve.

In accordance with the directive of November 25, after the troops of the 23rd Army entered the Savitaipale-Taavetti line (20 km west of Lappeenranta) - which, according to the plan, was supposed to happen on the 15th day of the operation - the mechanized corps was supposed to enter the gap that had been created and "in cooperation with the 20th and 23rd armies on the 35th day of the

*operation, capture the Helsingfors region.* The tasks of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet remained almost unchanged, only the number of rifle divisions landing on Hanko increased (*"To ensure the transfer of two rifle divisions in the very first days of the war from the northern coast of the Estonian SSR to the Hanko Peninsula, as well as the transfer and landing of a large landing on the*

*Aland Islands ...")* [120]. The directive of November 25, 1940 contains information that allows some assumptions about the likely timing of the invasion of Finland. The command of the Leningrad Military District was to complete the development of the operational plan by February 15, 1941. The start of the general offensive was planned on the 35th day from the start of the mobilization and concentration of troops of the North-Western Front (for the Northern Front, taking into account the vast distances and underdevelopment of the road network, the concentration of troops was given 40 days). Thus, the earliest start date for the offensive could be 22 March. But to start a large-scale offensive in southern Finland on March 22 is complete madness: the spring thaw turns the theater of supposed military operations into a continuous boundless swamp by this time. It is unlikely that Tymoshenko and Meretskov, personally familiar with the peculiarities of this area, could plan a "spring war". The closest reasonable date for the implementation of the November plan could only be the summer of 1941.

Closest does not mean "most likely". It is possible that still planned "winter war".

Unfortunately, nothing more definite can be said - the "directive" of November 25, 1940 is chronologically **the last of the options available** to us for developing an operational plan for a war with Finland. Archival funds of the military districts (including Leningrad) for the first half of 1941 are classified. More precisely, almost the entire array of documents of the first half of 1941 is not available.

(and not just the LenVO documents), since the RGVA funds chronologically end at the end of 1940, and TsAMO stores (at least, it is officially declared so) documents from the war period, i.e. starting from June 22, 1941. The timid clause “almost” refers to the fact that in some TsAMO funds there are sometimes scattered documents of the period before June 22, sometimes even “to the depth” until January-February 1941. But these are rare and accidental exceptions to general rule. On the whole, the first half of 1941 - the key to understanding Stalin's plans and intentions - simply “disappeared”, drowned in archival dust ... However, it's not at all worthy of surprise, but the fact that the “considerations” of September 18 and the directive of November 25, 1940 by some incredible miracle were published. In the era, the history of which this book is devoted to, in such cases they said: “And where only the organs look ...”

## Chapter

### 2.5 "MAJOR TIME WITH HITLER WENT ON THE FINNISH QUESTION..."

November 25, 1940 was undeservedly overlooked by Soviet historiography. And in vain - on this day, several significant events happened at once. One of them was discussed in the previous chapter, the other, incomparably more important, was connected with Soviet-German relations. On this day, November 25, 1940, Comrade Molotov, the head of the USSR government (he was also People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs), informed the German ambassador in Moscow, Count Schulenburg, the conditions under which the Soviet Union was ready to join the Triple Alliance ("Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis"). ") as the fourth full member of this

"elite club" of aggressors. If the open publication of the "Directive of the NGOs and the General Staff to the Commander of the Leningrad Military District" dated November 25 can only be explained by the regrettable carelessness and irresponsibility of "those who are supposed to", then it was very difficult for the Russian side to avoid publishing the text of the Molotov Statement of November 25, 1940, and the point is, it's pointless. Since this Statement was addressed to the government of Nazi Germany, and since it suffered a crushing defeat in World War II, the archives of Germany that was defeated and forced to unconditional surrender ended up in the hands of the victors. Thus, the documents of Soviet-German cooperation, in particular, the text of the condition for the USSR to join the "Pact of Four", ended up in the hands of the Americans and were published in 1948, in the famous collection of the US State Department

"Nazi-Soviet Relations". For almost half a century, Soviet propaganda (and Soviet "historical science" as its integral part) vehemently denounced the "bourgeois falsifiers of history" who dared to cast a shadow on the invariably peaceful foreign policy of their native CPSU. It was announced to the "City and the World" that in fact Comrade Molotov angrily rejected Hitler's insidious proposals and refused even to discuss the possibility of the Soviet Union joining the aggressive bloc of Nazis, fascists and Japanese militarists. Then, after receiving the command "hang up", in the Archive of the President of Russia (f. 3. op. 64. d. 675, l. 108) "suddenly" a typewritten text was "suddenly discovered", and even with Molotov's own note: "Transferred to Mr. Schulenburg by me on November 25, 1940. And signature: V. Molotov.

Oddly enough, but small and so, at first glance, far from the storms of big world politics, Finland was mentioned in the Molotov Statement, and even in the very first paragraph : "The

*USSR agrees to basically accept the draft four-power pact on their political cooperation and economic mutual assistance, outlined by Mr. Ribbentrop in his conversation with V. M. Molotov in Berlin on November 13, 1940 and consisting of 4 points, under the following conditions: German agreement 1939*

year, and the USSR undertakes to ensure peaceful relations with Finland, as well as the economic interests of Germany in Finland (export of timber, nickel).

2. If in the coming months the security of the USSR in the Straits is ensured by concluding a pact of mutual assistance between the USSR and Bulgaria, which, by its geographical position, is in the sphere of security of the Black Sea borders of the USSR, and the organization of a military and naval base of the USSR in the area of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles on the basis of a long-term rent.

3. If the center of gravity of the aspiration of the USSR is recognized as the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction to the Persian Gulf.

4. If Japan gives up its coal and oil concession rights on Northern Sakhalin on conditions of fair compensation.

In accordance with the foregoing, the draft protocol to the Treaty of 4 powers, presented by Mr. Ribbentrop on the delimitation of spheres of influence, should be changed in the spirit of determining the center of gravity of the aspiration of the USSR in the south of Batum and Baku in the general direction to the Persian Gulf (the Germans proposed to direct the territorial aspirations of the Soviet Union to side of the Indian Ocean, Stalin, through the mouth of Molotov, specified that he was much more interested in oil than Indian tea and elephants with emeralds.—MS).

In the same way, the draft protocol outlined by Mr. Ribbentrop, the Agreement between Germany, Italy, the USSR and Turkey, should be changed in the spirit of securing the military and naval base of the USSR near the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles on the basis of a long-term lease with a guarantee of independence from the 3 powers and the territory of Turkey in the event if Turkey agrees to join the four powers. This protocol should provide that in the event of Turkey's refusal to join the four powers, Germany, Italy and the USSR agree to develop and implement the necessary military and diplomatic measures, on which a special agreement should be concluded ... "[120].

In quantities deserving of paramount attention, German troops did not appear on the territory of Finland even in the summer of 1941 (the only 163rd Wehrmacht infantry division was in southern Finland, the 2nd and 3rd mountain infantry divisions operated in the polar North, 169 1st Infantry Division and the SS Nord Brigade; all together this amounted to about 3% of the total number of German troops near the borders of the USSR). In the autumn of 1940, not a single Wehrmacht battalion was stationed in Finland on a permanent basis. Nevertheless, Molotov's claims related to Hitler's brazen encroachment on the "sphere of influence of the USSR" were not entirely unfounded. In order to understand this issue, which has suddenly turned into an "apple of discord" between Berlin and Moscow, it is necessary to step back in the presentation of events several months ago.

During the Winter War, Germany, demonstrating absolute loyalty to its new eastern ally, took an emphatically pro-Soviet stance. Already on the third day of the war, a circular telegram was sent from Berlin to the German diplomatic missions abroad: *"In your conversations regarding the Finnish-Russian conflict, please avoid an anti-Russian tone"* [70]. On December 6, 1939, an additional instruction was sent out: *"In your conversations, sympathy should be expressed regarding the point of view of the Russians. refrain from*

*expressing any sympathy for the position of the Finns" [70].* Diplomatic courtesies were complemented by very specific deeds: Germany (despite the many years of lies of Soviet "historians") not only did not sell weapons to the Finns during the days of the "winter war", but also banned the transport of such weapons through German territory and even detained transports with weapons in the port of Bergen, purchased by Finland in third countries. It is worth noting that during negotiations with Hitler on November 13, 1940, Molotov readily admitted that *"the Russian government had no reason to criticize the position of Germany during this conflict" [70].* In March 1940, Germany and

the USSR took a solidarity position in opposition to the creation of a defensive alliance of three northern countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland), however, in this case, it was not so much the friendly feelings of the robbery partners that were decisive, but the pragmatic calculation of Germany no less than the Soviet The Union, at that moment, was interested in a weak, incapable of armed resistance Scandinavia. Moscow, for its part, supported Hitler's aggression against Norway both politically and, to some extent, practically (by placing at the disposal of the Germans a naval base in the Murmansk region). On April 9, 1940, on the first day of the invasion of Norway, Ambassador Schulenburg visited Molotov, where he was given the most cordial welcome: " ... *Molotov stated that the Soviet government*

*understood that Germany had been forced to resort to such measures. The British certainly went too far. They have absolutely no regard for the rights of neutral countries. In conclusion, Molotov said literally the following: "We wish*

*Germany*  
*complete victory in its defensive measures" [70].*

However, already in the summer of 1940, the "candy-bouquet" period in relations between the two dictators began

to draw to a close. Germany achieved "complete victory in its defensive measures", i.e. with dizzying speed established its control over most of Europe; the newborn Wehrmacht grew up and established itself in the status of the most combat-ready army in the world. The raw materials and food resources of the occupied and subject countries (including Romanian oil) reduced Hitler's dependence on Stalin's costly favors. Strange, but the Soviet foreign policy department did not want to see and evaluate these changes. In a qualitatively new situation, it continued to "twist its line" with the grace of an elephant in a china shop. It is even more strange (or, on the contrary, natural?) that the first conflicts were caused not by quarrels over mining on a geopolitical scale, but by completely petty redneck. At the end of June 1940, Moscow announced

its claims to the territory of Bukovina (the region bordering Ukraine in northern Romania in the upper reaches of the Prut River). Before the outbreak of the First World War, this territory was part of the Habsburg Empire (Austria-Hungary), and in the secret Soviet-German Protocol on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe of August 23, 1939, not a word was said about it. After a short, but by no means friendly discussion, the parties agreed that the Soviet Union limited its claims only to the northern part of Bukovina (the Chernivtsi region of modern Ukraine). In exchange for this "concession" Germany officially, through its ambassador in Bucharest, offered to the Romanian government

"in order to avoid a war between Romania and the Soviet Union, yield to the demands of the Soviet government" [70]. For its part, Moscow promised to take into account the German concern about the fate of ethnic Germans, who lived in numbers of more than 100 thousand people in the territory of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. The interests of the

Carpathian peasants of German origin, the head of the government of the USSR Molotov "took into account" as follows. A lengthy, multi-page document was drawn up, in which, indicating the exact number of "pocket and wrist watches, fur hats and coats" (new - separately, used separately), it was determined what a German family could take with them, which was generously allowed to leave the created the labor of many generations house and economy and leave the USSR. Tobacco, which was grown as a commercial crop in Bukovina, was not forgotten either. It was allowed to take no more than 20 kg per family [113]. It is difficult to understand for what purpose it was necessary to take away a bag of tobacco from a peasant. Comrade Stalin, as everyone knows, smoked "Herzegovina-Flor" and did not need a village "self-garden". But it is not at all difficult to imagine how such rudeness affected Hitler, in whose speeches (and perhaps in his thoughts) the fate of the Volksdeutsche living in Eastern Europe was constantly present ...

Further more. If the property of the Bukovinian peasants was calculated in hats and "onion" watches, then in the Baltic States the value of enterprises owned by the Germans (including Germans - citizens of Germany) amounted to hundreds of millions of marks. In connection with the "profound socio-economic transformations" that had begun in the Baltic countries, Molotov assured the German ambassador on July 29, 1940 that *"the Soviet government assumes responsibility for the activities carried out by the governments of the Baltic countries and for protecting German interests in them ... The Soviet government recommended that the Lithuanian government make an exception from the nationalization law for persons of German origin, both Lithuanian and German citizenship, and suspend the nationalization of their property so that all property issues could be settled directly between Berlin and Moscow. This settlement of property issues between Moscow and Berlin applies equally to Estonia and Latvia..."* [120].

After hearing this, Schulenburg expressed his gratitude for a long time. On October 17, 1940, the German ambassador in Moscow had to hear something new:

*"... tov. Molotov answers Schulenburg that the Soviet government declared a benevolent attitude towards Germany's interests in the Baltic states, but never assumed an obligation to **fully compensate** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) property to German citizens ... As for nationalization, it should be carried out in relation to Germans and persons of German nationality in the Baltics was postponed, but not canceled, about which the German government was also promptly and accurately informed ... "* [120]. Another discussion of the size of the "incomplete compensation" took place, by a strange

coincidence, also on November 25, 1940: *"... comrade. Molotov points out that this is the first exception that the Soviet side made from the principles of not compensating for nationalized property..."*

*subjects from 20 to 25%. Accordingly, for persons of German nationality when paying for 3 years - 25% instead of 15%, 6 years 35% instead of 20%, 10 years 40% instead of 25% ... com. Molotov again emphasizes that in one year it is impossible to compensate for such an amount (it turned out to be possible to confiscate property in one day. - M.S.) and that there is no such precedent in history ... "* [120]. The culmination of the

aggravation of Soviet-German relations in the autumn of 1940 was the so-called "Second Vienna Arbitration" and the conflict around it. On August 30, 1940, the centuries-old dispute over Transylvania was "resolved" in Vienna in one day. Under pressure from Germany and Italy, the Romanian leadership agreed to transfer the northern part of Transylvania (43.5 thousand square kilometers with a population of 2.5 million people) to Hungary. In exchange for his compliance, Marshal Antonescu received from the Axis countries official guarantees of the inviolability of the remaining territory of Romania. As a result of such a deal, Hungary (the future and, as it turned out, Hitler's most reliable ally) received a generous "advance", and a weakened and humiliated Romania found itself even more tightly fastened to the chariot of the fascist bloc. The Soviet

leadership immediately expressed their strongest protest. The very next day, August 31, 1940, Molotov told Schulenburg that *"the German government is violating Article 3 of the Non-Aggression Treaty of 08/23/1939, which refers to consultations on issues of interest to both sides.*

*The German government violated this article by failing to consult with the Soviet government on a question that cannot but affect the interests of the USSR, since we are talking about two states bordering the Soviet Union"* [120]. On September 9, 1940, Molotov explained to Schulenburg more specifically what the "interests of the USSR" violated by the Vienna Agreement were. Of course, the problem was not that the castle of the legendary Transylvanian vampire Dracula once again "changed its registration" - from Hungarian to Romanian. *"Tov. Molotov told Schulenburg that ... the Soviet*

*government, going towards the German government, reduced its claims to Romania and limited them in relation to Bukovina only to its northern part. But then Comrade. Molotov stated that when **the question of Southern Bukovina** is raised under appropriate conditions , we hope that the German government will support us in this matter. **The provision of guarantees to Romania** (here and above emphasized by me. - M.S.) is also at odds with this wish of the Soviet government"* [120].

And that is not all. On September 21, Molotov summoned Schulenburg and handed him "a memorandum regarding non-compliance by the German government with Article 3 of the Non-Aggression Pact." Despite the fact that this time Moscow's claims were expressed in writing, it became even more difficult to understand the position of the Soviet leadership.

more difficult

*"... The Soviet government also cannot but pay attention to the fact that **by giving guarantees to Romania regarding its state territory, it was given reason to assert that this act of the German government was directed against the USSR.** As is well known, such assertions have indeed gained considerable currency. Meanwhile, if the German government had previously asked the government of the USSR on this issue, then there would have been no reason to spread such assertions, and at the same time the German government would be completely convinced that*



*that **the USSR is not going to threaten** (here and above it was emphasized by me. - M.S.) **the territorial integrity of Romania**" [120].*

If you understand all this directly and simply (as it is written). it turns out that the scandal that dragged on for almost a month - and not just a scandal, but an official accusation of violating the Non-Aggression Treaty - was caused only by the fact that Berlin did not ask Moscow's consent in advance. And nothing more, the Soviet Union, it turns out, was not going to "threaten the territorial integrity of Romania" - but the guarantees of this immunity given by Germany and Italy, for some reason, caused an uproar.

Completely bewildered, Schulenburg began to babble something completely incoherent: "... Schulenburg says that from the very beginning (since August 1939) of the resolution of the Bessarabian issue, the impression was created that the USSR had no claims against Romania ... As for South Bukovina, then it is perhaps his fault that he did not quite understand the question.

Tov. Molotov repeats what he already said to Schulenburg about Southern Bukovina, adding that he said it in an indefinite form and it is possible that Schulenburg did not attach due importance to what was said at that time.

Schulenburg says that he is very sorry that these disagreements have arisen between the Soviet and German governments ... and he will do everything to bring clarity to this issue.

Tov. Molotov declares that if Article 3 of the Non-Aggression Pact represents inconvenience and embarrassment for Germany, then the Soviet government is ready to discuss the question of changing or canceling this article of the treaty, but so far it exists ...

Schulenburg hurriedly says that this is an accident and that there is no out of the question..." (120, p. 264).

"Accident" was further developed. On November 13, 1940, during negotiations with Hitler in Berlin, Molotov again returned to the Romanian issue: "... As for Bukovina, although this was not provided for by the additional protocol, the USSR made a **concession to Germany and temporarily abandoned Southern Bukovina**, confining itself to Northern Bukovina, but at the same time made his reservation that the USSR hoped that in due time Germany would take into account the interest of the Soviet Union in South Bukovina. The USSR has not yet received a negative response from Germany to its expressed wish, but Germany, instead of such an answer, **guaranteed the entire territory of Romania, forgetting about our indicated interest** (here and above, it was emphasized by me. - M.S.) and generally giving these guarantees without consultation with the USSR and in violation of the interests of the USSR" (120, p. 378).

Only 200 km remained from the new Soviet-Romanian border to the center of the oil-producing region of Ploiesti.

Unlike the elderly Count Schulenburg, Hitler assessed the situation adequately:

"... The Fuhrer replied that if only part of Bukovina remains with Russia, then this will also be a significant concession from Germany. In accordance with the oral agreement, the former Austrian territory should enter the German sphere of influence. In addition, the territories included in the Russian zone were named by name, for example, Bessarabia. Regarding Bukovina, not a single word was said in the agreement ... In order for German-Russian cooperation to bring positive results in the future. The Soviet government must understand that

*Germany is engaged in a life-and-death struggle which, under all circumstances, must be brought to a successful conclusion. The number of prerequisites necessary for this, depending on economic and military factors, Germany wants to secure for itself by any means..." [70]. We have cited these facts,*

which at first glance do not have a direct relationship to the Soviet-Finnish confrontation in 1940, in order to make clearer the military-political context in which the leadership of Nazi Germany turned its interested look at Finland at the end of the summer of 1940 .

In the presentation of Marshal Mannerheim, the events developed as follows:

*"On August 17, 1940, I received a telegram from the Ambassador of Finland in Berlin in which I was asked ... to receive the German lieutenant colonel Veltjens, who was instructed to convey the message of Reichsmarschall Goering ... Veltjens on the same evening (August 18) visited me at home and conveyed Goering's greetings. He asked if Finland, following the example of Sweden, would like to allow the transportation of German household goods through its territory, as well as the passage of vacationers and the sick to Kirkenes (a port in northern Norway). In addition, Veltjens said that now we will have the opportunity to receive military equipment from Germany ... When I visited Ryti in the evening of the same day (August 19). the Acting President instructed me to give the Reichsmarschall, through his envoy, a positive answer to the question of through transportation. This is what I told Veltjens when he came to me the next morning.*

*The military authorities of both states considered private issues of transportation of equipment, patients and vacationers, and these negotiations ended with a technical agreement signed on September 12. After negotiations were held on this issue by representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs, on the 22nd of the same month a formal agreement was signed" [22].*

Formally, legally, the transit of military cargo and military personnel (even if they were called "sick and vacationers") through the territory of Finland meant Germany's intervention in the sphere of interests of the USSR, recorded in the secret Protocol of August 23, 1939. Formally, legally, the transit of military cargo and military personnel is incompatible with the most strict interpretation of the concept of "neutrality". This is just as true as the fact that the provision by the Soviet Union of a naval base on the Kola Peninsula at the disposal of the German Navy was incompatible with the officially declared neutrality of the USSR in the outbreak of the world war, and signed on July 22 (i.e. a month before the start of negotiations on German transit), the agreement on the transit of weapons and military units of the Red Army through the territory of Finland in Hanko (and the very fact of the existence of a Soviet military base on Finnish territory!) undermined the neutral status of this country. Other similar conclusions can be cited - but it is unlikely that there will be at least a shred of common sense in this. The policy of the two dictators - starting with the conclusion of an absolutely illegal deal on the division of the territories of sovereign European countries into "spheres of interest" and ending with the invasion of German and Soviet troops into Norway and Finland - has gone so far beyond the boundaries of any "legal field" that legal chicanery becomes in this context completely pointless. Much more meaningful is the analysis of the practical actions of the parties, the motives for these actions and their consequences.

The problem of supplying the grouping of German troops in Norway, indeed, existed. Under the conditions of British domination of the sea, the "geometrically shortest" route from German ports to Norwegian ports through the North Sea was too dangerous. In this sense, the use of the ports of the Gulf of Bothnia greatly simplified the task. On the other hand, the Gulf of Bothnia has two shores (Swedish and Finnish), and there is no direct railway line to Kirkenes either on Swedish or Finnish territory. In the presence of an agreement on transit with Sweden (it was concluded in July 1940), transit through Finland became a useful addition and prudent duplication of already existing transport routes. The stock, as they say, "does not pull the pocket", and by organizing another transport corridor, the Germans made the position of their troops in Norway more stable.

At the same time, it seems quite reasonable to assume that the desire to support Finland, which was balancing on the edge of the abyss, was no less a weighty motive for the actions of the German leadership than the purely pragmatic interest in obtaining another transport corridor to supply the Norwegian group. Of course, the desire to prevent the final absorption of Finland by the Soviet Union was not caused by an altruistic sense of solidarity. Hitler could not but understand that any appearance of German soldiers or military supplies in the territory assigned to the "sphere of interest" of the Soviet Union would cause an extremely negative reaction in Moscow. An equally sharp (and easily predictable) reaction should have been caused by the proposal to "pay" (in every sense of the word) for Finland's consent to transit with arms supplies from Germany (or through Germany). And if Hitler went for all this, it means that he had serious reasons to strive to preserve Finnish independence. One of the most important was the Petsamo nickel. Nickel is the most important alloying element in the production of high-strength structural steels,

and in the composition of stainless and heat-resistant alloys, the mass fraction of nickel is in the range from 10 to 60%. Translated into the language of military equipment of the middle of the 20th century, nickel means airplanes and aircraft engines, i.e. precisely those types of weapons in which Germany aspired (and very successfully) to world leadership. There are few large nickel deposits in Europe, in fact there are two: Petsamo (now Pechenga) and Norilsk. The struggle around the nickel enterprises of Petsamo, either fading away or approaching a direct armed clash, continued for almost the entire period of the "peaceful respite" (from the spring of 1940 to the spring of 1941). Let us recall once again that in March 1940, at the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty, Petsamo turned out to be the only (!) point on the map where the Soviet Union not only did not move the border line further than the Red Army actually advanced, but, on the contrary, returned back what was captured. Let us repeat the generally accepted version of the reasons for such "conscientiousness": the concession to develop the Petsamo nickel deposits belonged to a British (Canadian) company, and Stalin decided at that moment not to aggravate already tense relations with the West.

After the defeat of France in the summer of 1940, Stalin decided that Britain, besieged on his island, could no longer stand on ceremony. At the same moment, Hitler came to a similar assumption. As a result, two interconnected events occurred almost simultaneously. On June 23, 1940, the Soviet Union demanded that the Finnish government terminate the concession agreement with the British firm

and transfer the nickel mines to the disposal of the USSR or a joint Soviet-Finnish enterprise. The Finns refused, arguing their refusal with the right and generally accepted norms of business relations, which do not allow the termination of the contract by the former concessionaires, who had already invested huge funds in Petsamo. On the other side, Finland expressed its readiness to supply the USSR with 50% of all mined nickel. Moscow disagreed and continued to push for control of the mines. In the meantime, on July 27, 1940, the German industrial giant I.G. Farbenindustrie signed a contract to purchase 60% of all nickel ore mined in Petsamo. From that moment on, Germany became directly interested in maintaining the independence and stability of Finland, whose government acted as a guarantor of the contract. As for the plans and hopes for the future German-Finnish

military cooperation, it is not possible to confirm or exclude the presence of such thoughts in anyone's head. The facts are that in August 1940 Germany launched a grandiose air offensive ("Battle for Britain") and was quite actively preparing for a possible "jump" of ground forces across the English Channel. The alliance of Germany with the USSR by that time had already begun to show the first cracks, but it was still infinitely far from planning a joint offensive of Finnish and German troops on Kandalaksha. In any case, the transfer **of several German anti-aircraft batteries through the territory of Finland to Kirkenes did not change anything in the situation either at the strategic (it is generally absurd to argue about this) or at the tactical level.** Moscow's reaction to Germany's sudden interest in Finnish affairs turned out to be

completely inadequate. **It was this inadequacy of the Soviet reaction** (and not the German-Finnish transit agreement in itself) that helped Finland not to appear in the autumn of 1940 on the list of the Baltic countries that *"thrown off the hated bourgeois regimes."* The "vigilance" that went beyond all reasonable limits and the almost pathological "mania of persecution" that tormented the Kremlin rulers led to the fact that they saw in the transit agreement almost a military alliance between Germany and Finland. In addition, the official message about the beginning of the transit was received by the Soviet leadership under rather strange circumstances.

On September 16, Ambassador Schulenburg was instructed from Berlin to visit Molotov on the afternoon of September 21 (that is, the day before the start of the actual transport) and - "unless you receive other instructions by then" - to inform him of the following: *"The continuing penetration of British aircraft into the air the space of Germany and the territories occupied by it makes it necessary to strengthen the defense of some objects, primarily in the north of Norway. Part of this reinforcement is the transfer of an anti-aircraft artillery battalion there, along with its support. When searching for transfer routes, it turned out that the least difficult route for this purpose would be through Finland. The division will presumably be unloaded on September 22 near Haparanda, and then transported to Norway, partly by rail, partly by highway. The Finnish government, taking into account the special circumstances, allowed Germany this transportation. We want to inform the Soviet government in advance about this step"* [70].

On September 21, Schulenburg visited Molotov, but the entire meeting turned out to be devoted to a "showdown" on the Romanian issue. Message about German

transit through Finland never sounded. Why? Schulenburg received "other instructions"? Or forgot the ones available under the pressure of an angry Molotov? We don't have answers to these questions. Be that as it may, the exchange of information on the issue of transit did not take place until 26 September. Schulenburg was in Berlin, and Germany's interests in Moscow were represented by Charge d'Affaires Toppelskirch, who the day before had been instructed by Ribbentrop to inform Molotov of the signing of the Tripartite Pact ("Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis") scheduled for September 27. There was nothing pleasant in this message for Molotov. In combination with such deafening news, the message about the beginning of military transit through Finland - and even received by Moscow not through normal diplomatic channels, but from newspapers - should have left the impression on Molotov of an ominous "encirclement". "... tov.

*Molotov tells Toppelskirch that he is still interested in such a question. According to the latest reports from Berlin, some kind of treaty has been concluded with Finland on a military issue. There are no messages from the German government yet. Tov. Molotov asked Toppelskirch if he had any confirmation.*

*Toppelskirch replied that he knew nothing. Then tov.*

*Molotov outlined the content of the telegram of the Plenipotentiary of the USSR in Germany Comrade. Shkvartsev about a press conference on September 25 at the German Foreign Ministry, where head. Schmidt, the press department, announced that a communiqué of the Finnish government had been published on the signing of a German-Finnish agreement on the transit of German troops through Finland to Norway. In addition, a bulletin is distributed in Berlin by the United Press agency, which reports on the landing of German troops on September 24 in the Finnish port of Vaasa and that the senior officers who arrived with the troops were accommodated in Vaasa hotels.*

*Toppelskirch again replied that he knew nothing on the matter. Tov. Molotov declared that he had information about the landing of German troops in Finland in the cities of Vaasa, Uleaborg and Pori, and again asked if Toppelskirch knew this. Toppelskirch replied that he*

*had heard about it from journalists, but he*

*does not know.*

*Tov. Molotov said that. apparently, some kind of treaty has also been concluded with Finland and the Soviet government wants to receive information about this treaty, about its goals, as well as its full text and additional secret articles, if any ... "[120].*

Probably, Comrade Molotov did not even allow the thought that "the highest officers were accommodated in the hotels of Vaaz" simply in order to get enough sleep and rest after a tiring sea voyage (Molotov and his master did not stand on ceremony with their "officers"). In the mind inflamed with eternal suspicion, the cockroaches grew to the size of elephants, and the unknown provincial hotel turned to the "headquarters of the Wehrmacht army group" in Finland. This is how fate once again had mercy on the people of Suomi.

Stalin's excessive caution and exceptional restraint (the reader is free to substitute other words) saved Finland. Far from giving up their "rights" under the secret Protocol of August 23, 1939, the Kremlin authorities decided **to obtain additional confirmation of these rights from Hitler before proceeding to military action.**

**solution of the Finnish question.** Is it necessary to prove that in a gambling game with a Berlin swindler such tactics could not but lead to a shameful embarrassment?

If August 1939 can be considered the "finest hour" of Stalinist diplomacy, then Molotov's November (1940) visit to Berlin was probably the biggest failure. To tell the truth, the situation has become incomparably more complicated. In August

1939, "all the cards" were in the hands of Stalin. He had the largest land army in the world, the largest combat aircraft, huge herds of tanks (outnumbering the tank forces of all European countries combined). The fact that the real combat effectiveness of this steel armada, to put it mildly, does not correspond to its size, in August 1939, no one could know for sure. Moreover, on the battlefields of the civil war in Spain, "light German tanks in the fight against republican (i.e. Soviet) cannon tanks were not in any comparison and were shot mercilessly", and this, presumably, was noticed not only by the future head of the Chief of the Armored Directorate of the Red Army, General of the Army Pavlov (whose words we quoted above), but also the military specialists of Germany. In the summer of 1939, Hitler had the imprudence (if not to say stupidity) to declare publicly his desire to deal with Poland. Thus, the

success (or failure) of the Polish campaign - the first major operation of the newborn Wehrmacht - turned out to be inextricably linked with Hitler's personal authority and his claims to be the "chosen of providence." It turned out to be easier said than done. By August 16 (beginning from that day, Berlin literally bombarded Molotov with telegrams with a request to receive Ribbentrop) the summer was almost over, there was no more than a month left before the start of the autumn thaw, and all conceivable dates for the outbreak of hostilities were coming to an end.

Poland, on the other hand, received official "guarantees" of the inviolability of its borders from France and England, and Comrade Stalin mysteriously smoked his famous pipe. On August 14, the Pravda newspaper (the official press organ of the party of which Stalin himself was the General Secretary) wrote: *"The policy of peace does not at all mean concessions to the aggressors, concessions that only whet the predatory appetites of the invaders ... The Bolsheviks are not pacifists. The real defense of peace does not consist in concessions to the aggressor, but in a double blow against the blow of the warmongers ... "*

And how should such words be understood? Didn't they mean the readiness of one and two million Soviet "volunteers" at the first call of the party and government to come to the aid of the working people of fraternal Poland? Yes, the pre-war Soviet-Polish relations were outwardly very far from friendship, but the Soviet-German outwardly looked even worse. *"The culprits and instigators of the second imperialist war are present. This is fascism, a criminal and dirty offspring of post-war imperialism."* These words on July 31, 1939, Pravda did not write about Poland at all ... In August 1939, Stalin could have pardoned

Hitler, or he could have killed him. And it is no coincidence that on August 21, while waiting for a response from Moscow, Hitler rushed around the office like a hunted animal. At that moment, he was ready to give Stalin even more than Stalin was ready to demand. And this is by no means "artistic hyperbole." On June 24, 1940, at the time of the aggravation of the conflict over Bessarabia and Bukovina, Ribbentrop prepared a memorandum in which he reminded Hitler of the following circumstances of the Moscow negotiations in August 1939: *"The Fuhrer authorized me*

*declare German disinterest in the territories of southeastern Europe as far as Constantinople and the Straits, if that were necessary. The latter, however, was not discussed" [70].*

Up to Constantinople and the Straits! Moscow tsars could only dream...

In November 1940, friendship with Stalin was no longer a matter of life and death for Hitler. Parenthetically, we note that subsequent events showed with obvious clarity that Germany could have fought without Soviet oil (moreover, even against Soviet oil, which set in motion tens of thousands of tanks and aircraft of the Red Army). Accordingly, Hitler's attitude towards his Moscow partner also changed: from the hysterical "at any cost" in Berlin, they switched to a captious calculation of the "profit and loss" that the alliance with Stalin brings them. In any case, Hitler no longer wanted to pay further (pay with territories conquered by the power of German weapons, pay with deliveries of the latest models of military equipment and industrial equipment) for the mere non-interference of the Soviet Union in the affairs of Western Europe.

In this qualitatively new situation, Moscow probably had to make a new big decision. It was necessary to decide **with whom and against whom the Soviet Union intended to end the world war**. In other words, either enter into a full-fledged military alliance with Germany and jointly defeat the British Empire "in heaven, on earth and at sea" - and after that claim and receive your share in the colossal "British inheritance". Or again call Hitler "a criminal and dirty offspring of imperialism" and with the words "our cause is just, the enemy will be defeated, victory will be ours" to strike a crushing blow at the then almost defenseless (on October 1, about 30 Wehrmacht divisions were concentrated near the borders of the USSR) eastern frontiers of the Third Reich.

Alas, **the Moscow dictator turned out to be too small for big decisions. The grand deal between the two tyrants did not take place.** Fortunately for mankind - and to a bitter misfortune for his subjects - in November 1940, Stalin took the first step towards the catastrophe of June 1941. Molotov was sent to Berlin with a whole heap of claims, petty grievances, paranoid suspicions. Stalin clearly expressed his desire to loot in war-weakened southeastern Europe without offering Hitler anything substantial in return. In Stalin's instructions personally recorded by Molotov (Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, f. 36, op. 1, file 1161, l. 147-155), the goals of the Berlin meeting were defined as follows:

*"1. Purpose of the trip a) To find out the real intentions of Germany and all the participants of the Pact of the 3rd... the prospects for other countries to join the Pact of the 3rd; the place of the USSR in these plans at the present time and in the future. b) Prepare an initial outline of the sphere of interests of the USSR in Europe, as well as in Lower and Central Asia.*

*so that the following are included in the sphere of interests of the USSR: a) Finland - on the basis of the Soviet-German agreement of 1939, in the implementation of which Germany must eliminate all difficulties and ambiguities (the withdrawal of German troops, the cessation of all political demonstrations in*

*Finland and Germany, directed to the detriment of the interests of the USSR). b) Danube, in the part of the Sea Danube, in accordance with the directives of Comrade Sobolev. To also mention our dissatisfaction with the fact that Germany did not consult with the USSR on the question of guarantees and the introduction of troops into Romania. c) Bulgaria - the main issue of the negotiations - should be, by agreement with Germany and Italy, assigned to the sphere of interests of the USSR on the same basis of guarantees to Bulgaria from the USSR, as was done by Germany and Italy in relation to Romania, with the entry of Soviet troops into **Bulgaria** ( underlined by me. - M.S.). d) The question of Turkey and its fate cannot be resolved without our participation, because we have serious interests in Turkey. e) The question of the future fate of Rumania and Hungary, as bordering the USSR, is of great interest to us, and we would like to have an agreement on this with us. f) The question of Iran cannot be resolved without the participation of the USSR, because we have serious interests there. Don't talk about it without need..." [120].*

Then there were four more sub-items (g, h, i, j) with less significant questions, then several items of the informational plan. So for what, for what services, Hitler had to cede Bulgaria to the Kremlin extortionist this time (the "main issue of negotiations"! ), Take into account Stalin's "interests" in Turkey, Iran, Hungary and Romania? In paragraph 13, another Soviet proposal was noted on "compensation" (or rather, on the procedure and conditions for confiscation) of the property of German subjects in the Baltic states ("25% in one year, 50% in three years in equal shares") [120 ]. Perhaps the only point where there was some reciprocity of services was point 10:

*"10. Propose to make a peaceful action in the form of an open declaration of 4 powers (if a favorable course of the main negotiations turns out: Bulgaria, Turkey, etc.) on the terms of maintaining the British Empire (without mandated territories) with all those possessions that England now owns and on condition of its non-intervention in the affairs of Europe and the immediate withdrawal from Gibraltar and Egypt, as well as the obligation of the immediate return of the former colonies to Germany and the immediate granting of dominion rights to India" [120].* Thus, in exchange for a significant expansion of

the "sphere of interest" of the USSR in southeastern Europe ("with the entry of Soviet troops into Bulgaria"), Stalin promised to sign another paper with demands and threats against Great Britain, and even return half in three years (! ) the value of property confiscated in the Baltic States ...

The real outcome of the negotiations in Berlin turned out to be even more inconclusive than might be expected, judging by the completely inadequate instructions to Molotov. The first conversation with Hitler, which lasted, taking into account the translation time of 2.5 hours, took place on November 12, 1940. For the most part, it consisted of a lengthy monologue by Hitler, in which he assured his guest that England had actually already been defeated (and only due to Churchill's extreme "amateurishness" she has not yet understood this) and the longed-for moment of dividing up the huge "heritage" of the British Empire is approaching. From the Soviet Union, Hitler did not ask for anything other than non-intervention, promising to later take it as a share and give, for example, India and ice-free ports in the Indian Ocean.

Late in the evening of the same day, an encrypted telegram flew to Moscow with conversation report:



*"... Our preliminary discussion in Moscow correctly elucidated the issues which I encountered here.*

*While I'm trying to get information and probe partners. Their answers in conversation are not always clear and require further clarification. Hitler's great interest in negotiating and strengthening friendship with the USSR on spheres of influence is evident. Also noticeable is the desire to push us against Turkey, from which Ribbentrop wants only absolute neutrality. **Finland is still silent about, but I will make them talk about it** (emphasis mine. - M.S.).*

*I ask for instructions. Molotov" [120].*

On the morning of November 13, a reply cipher flew from Moscow to Berlin: *"For Molotov from the Instance. We consider your behavior in the negotiations to be correct" [120].* It's funny that the mysterious Instance called himself in the plural ("we believe"), and addressed the head of the USSR government with "you" ("your behavior"). However, the expression **"strengthen friendship about spheres of influence"** should rightfully take a place in

the annals of belles-lettres ... It can be assumed that, having received approval for his actions from Stalin, Molotov went to a meeting with Hitler with redoubled energy in order to make him "talk about Finland ". And this task turned out to be fulfilled and even exceeded - most of the second (and last in history) conversation between Molotov and Hitler turned out to be devoted not to the issues of dividing the Indian Ocean, the Black Sea straits, and Egypt. Iran and Gibraltar, and small, but so much irritating Moscow Finland. This conversation took place in the style of a "dialogue of two deaf people." With the monotony of a jammed gramophone record, Molotov repeated two theses over and over again: Finland was included in the Soviet "sphere of interest", and therefore the USSR had the right to immediately begin "solving the Finnish problem." Hitler, more and more irritated, replied that there were no German troops in Finland, the transit would soon end, but Germany would not tolerate a new war in the Baltic Sea area. One of the "coils" of this tedious squabble looked like this:

*"... Molotov continues that with regard to Finland, he considers that to clarify this issue is his first duty; this does not require a new agreement, but should only adhere to what has been established, i.e. that Finland should be an area of Soviet interest. This is of particular importance now that there is a war going on. The Soviet Union, although it did not participate in the big war, **nevertheless fought against Poland, against Finland and was completely ready, if necessary, for a war for Bessarabia** (here and below it is emphasized by me. - M.S.). If the German point of view on this matter had changed, he would like clarity on the matter.*

*Hitler states that Germany's position on the matter has not changed, but he only does not want a war in the Baltic Sea. In addition, Germany is interested in Finland only as a supplier of timber and nickel. Germany cannot tolerate war there now, but believes that this is the area of Russia's interests. The same applies to Rumania, from where Germany receives oil; there, too, war is unacceptable. If we move on to more important questions, Hitler says, then this question will be irrelevant. Finland will not leave the Soviet Union. Hitler then asks **if the Soviet Union intends to wage war in Finland?** He considers this a significant issue.*

*Molotov replies that if **the government of Finland abandons its dual policy and incites the masses against the USSR, then everything will go fine ...** " [120].* Hitler did not know Russian, but he

understood the Soviet newspeak quite well. He perfectly understood the meaning of Molotov's answer, after which he tried to scare Molotov with the complexities of a new Finnish war.

"... Hitler says that one should take into account those circumstances that, perhaps, would not have occurred in other areas. One may have military possibilities, but the conditions of the terrain are such that the war will not be quickly ended. If there is a prolonged resistance, then this may assist in the creation of strong British bases. Then Germany herself will have to intervene in this matter, which is undesirable for her. He wouldn't have said that if Russia really had a reason to be offended by Germany. After the end of the war, Russia can get everything she wants ...

Molotov makes the remark that words do not always correspond to deeds. It is in the interests of both countries that there be peace in the Baltic Sea, and if the question of Finland is resolved in accordance with last year's agreement, then everything will go very well and normally. If, however, a reservation is allowed to postpone this issue until the end of the war, this will mean a violation or change of last year's agreement ...

Hitler claims that this will not be a breach of the treaty, since Germany just does not want a war in the Baltic Sea. If there is a war, then relations between Germany and the Soviet Union will be complicated and difficult, and further great joint work will be difficult ...

Molotov believes that we are not talking about the war in the Baltic Sea, but about the Finnish issue that should be resolved on the basis of last year's state agreement.

Hitler makes the remark that in this agreement it was established that Finland belongs to the sphere of Russian interests. Molotov asks: "In the same situation as, for example, Estonia and Bessarabia?" (120, p. 380).

In the German version of the minutes of the conversation, this moment is recorded as follows: Molotov replied that the matter was not in the question of the war in the Baltic, but in resolving the Finnish problem within the framework of the agreement of the previous year. Answering the Fuhrer's question, he stated that **he envisions a settlement within the same framework as in Bessarabia and neighboring countries** (emphasis mine. -

M.S.)" [70]. It is noteworthy that neither Hitler nor Molotov even **considered it necessary to mention the Peace Treaty between the USSR and Finland**, concluded on March 12, 1940. Although what is surprising here? Authoritative godfathers gathered for a specific bazaar, it's somehow not customary to talk about worthless pieces of paper signed with suckers at such summits ...

At two in the morning on November 14, 1940, the following telephone message went to Moscow: "Stalin. Today, November 13, a conversation with Hitler took place for three and a half hours and after dinner, in addition to the program talks, a three-hour conversation with Ribbentrop ... Both conversations did not give the desired results. The main **time with Hitler was spent on the Finnish question** (emphasis mine. - M.S.). Hitler said that he confirms last year's agreement, but Germany says that it is interested in maintaining peace in the Baltic Sea. My indication that last year no reservations were made on this issue was not refuted, but it had no effect either ... These are

main results. There is nothing to brag about, but at least it revealed Hitler's current moods, which will have to be reckoned with" [120].

The two documents dated November 25, 1940, which were discussed above, testify to how exactly the Kremlin decided to "reckon with Hitler's opinion". In exchange for a military base on the Dardanelles, a "mutual assistance agreement" with Bulgaria, and recognition of the Persian Gulf region as "the center of the USSR's territorial aspirations," Moscow promised to " *ensure peaceful relations with Finland.*" On the same day, November 25, the command of the Leningrad Military District received a directive from the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR with an order to start developing an operational plan for a military operation aimed at defeating the Finnish army and completely occupying the country "on the 45th day of the operation", and the development of the plan should have been completed by a very definite date - by February 15, 1941.

## Chapter

### 2.6 LAST PEACE MONTHS

The content of Molotov's many hours of exhausting conversations in Berlin can be briefly and accurately expressed in five words: whoever did not have time, he was late. What Stalin managed to get his hands on in Eastern Europe from September 1939 to September 1940 was left to him. Hitler did not give consent to any new advances of the USSR to the west (southwest, northwest). Notwithstanding the text of the secret Protocol of August 23, 1939, and any possible interpretations of this text. From that moment (since November 1940), Soviet-Finnish relations were so tightly integrated into the general context of big European politics that it became impossible to study and describe them in isolation.

It is generally accepted that the Soviet proposals of November 25, 1940 (on the conditions for the USSR to join the "Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis") were not answered. This is not entirely true, or rather, not at all. The first "response" in a row was the deafening silence of Berlin, which in fact refused to even begin discussing these conditions. It is worth noting that on January 17, 1941, Molotov found it possible to express to Ambassador Schulenburg his "diplomatic bewilderment" at the absence of any reaction from Berlin to the Soviet proposals, but this did not change anything either. The second, incomparably more significant "answer" was the official accession of Bulgaria to the "axis" (March 1, 1941) and the entry of German troops into its territory. This happened despite repeated statements by the USSR government that *"it will consider the appearance of any foreign troops on the territory of Bulgaria or in the Straits as a violation of the security interests of the USSR"* [70]. On the same day, March 1, 1941, Molotov handed Schulenburg a note with the

following content: *"1. It is very unfortunate that, despite the warning from the Soviet government in its demarche of November 25, 1940, the German government considered it possible to take the path of violating the security interests of the USSR and decided to occupy Bulgaria with troops.*

*2. In view of the fact that the Soviet government remains on the basis of its demarche of 25 November. The German government must understand that it cannot count on the support of the USSR for its actions in Bulgaria"* [120].

The meaning and intonation, as we see, are completely new - and after all, less than a year ago, every new step of Hitlerite aggression was met in Moscow with the wishes of *"the complete victory of Germany in its defensive measures ..."*

The first days of April 1941 were the culmination of the Soviet-German confrontation in

the Balkans. union. However, already on the night of March 26-27, a military coup took place in Belgrade. The new government of General Simovich announced its intention to give a firm rebuff to German claims and turned to the Soviet Union for help. April 3 (i.e. just a week after the coup)

The Yugoslav delegation was already negotiating a friendship treaty in Moscow and had a meeting with Stalin himself. Despite the fact that Germany, through Ambassador Schulenburg, brought to the attention of Molotov its opinion that *"the moment for concluding an agreement with Yugoslavia was chosen unsuccessfully and causes an undesirable impression"*, at 2.30 am on April 6, 1941, the Soviet-Yugoslav agreement was

signed. Article 2 of the Treaty read: *"In the event that one of the Contracting Parties is attacked by a third state, the other Contracting Party undertakes to observe the policy of friendly relations towards it"* [121]. Moreover, the opinion of the government of the USSR was brought to the attention of the Yugoslav delegation that *"we are not opposed to Yugoslavia drawing closer to England and to all those states that can help Yugoslavia, we do not at all exclude the possibility that Yugoslavia will conclude an agreement with England. We would consider it even expedient"* [121]. A few hours after the signing of the treaty, Luftwaffe aircraft subjected

Belgrade to a fierce bombardment, and German troops invaded Yugoslav territory. The Soviet Union limited the promised "policy of friendly relations" with Yugoslavia to the fact that on April 6, at 4 pm Moscow time, Molotov received Schulenburg and, after hearing the official report on the Wehrmacht's invasion of Yugoslavia, limited himself to a melancholy remark: "It is extremely sad that, despite all efforts, the expansion of the war thus proved inevitable." *It turned out to be inevitable...* And that's all. The discouraged Schulenburg reported to Berlin: "Molotov did not take the opportunity to mention the Soviet Yugoslav pact. According to the instructions, I also did not raise this issue" [70].

What was behind these strange actions of Stalinist diplomacy? Why was it so defiantly "teasing" Hitler, not having the desire (and the practical possibility) to provide Yugoslavia with effective military assistance? Why was it

necessary to demonstrate to the whole world that the Soviet promises of "friendly relations" are worth even less than the notorious Anglo-French "guarantees"? In any case, Moscow's April demarche was received with extreme irritation in Berlin. Later (June 22, 1941), it was the events of April 5–6 that were used in the German memorandum declaring war on the Soviet Union as the main evidence of the hostile policy that the Soviet Union pursued against Germany ("With the conclusion of the Soviet Yugoslav friendship treaty that strengthened the rear of the Belgrade The USSR joined the common Anglo-Yugoslav-Greek front directed against Germany... Only quick German victories led to the collapse of the Anglo-Russian plans to attack the German troops in Romania and Bulgaria") [70].

In the last paragraph, the Germans were deeply mistaken: there were no joint "Anglo-Russian plans" and even more so "Anglo-Russian fronts" were not in sight. Surprisingly, but true: **Comrade Stalin did not make the slightest attempt to improve his relations with Hitler's real opponents.** Although, according to sound logic, it would be from this that the Great Turn in the foreign policy of the USSR should have begun. Moreover, the rigidity (if not to say boorish arrogance) towards the warring Britain and its overseas ally only grew. A detailed analysis of this component of the events of the first half of 1941 is far beyond the scope of this article.

books. Without trying to embrace the immensity, we will, nevertheless, cite a few rather eloquent episodes. After

W. Churchill headed the British government in May 1940, he replaced the British ambassador to the USSR and sent Stafford Cripps to Moscow, the most "leftist" person loyal to Soviet Russia who was only in his "team" ("the *only time I was booed in parliament was my speech in favor of the Soviet Union*," Cripps told Vyshinsky). On July 1, 1940, Cripps was able to get a meeting with Stalin (a rare honor in those days - for example, the US Ambassador Steinhardt was never received by Stalin) and gave him a personal message from Churchill. In that document, in particular, it was said: "... *At the moment, the whole of Europe, including both of our countries, faces the problem of how the states and peoples of Europe will react to the prospect of Germany establishing hegemony over the continent ... The Soviet government itself is able to judge whether the interests of the Soviet Union are threatened by the present desire of Germany for hegemony over Europe and, if so, how best to ensure these interests ...*" [120].

Having stated the position of Her Majesty's Government, S. Cripps heard the following in response: "... *comrade. Stalin says that we want to change the old balance in Europe, which acted against the USSR ... Comrade Stalin notes that if there is a question of restoring the balance and, in particular, establishing a balance in relation to the USSR, then we must say that we cannot agree to this ..*

... *As for the subjective data about the desires for domination in Europe, Comrade. Stalin considers it his duty to declare that in all the meetings that he had with German representatives, he did not notice such a desire on the part of Germany - to dominate the whole world ...*" [120]. Subsequently (largely

due to the annexation of the Baltic states), the cooling of Soviet-British relations reached the point that Cripps unsuccessfully tried for several months to get a meeting with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Molotov. Convinced of the futility of these attempts, Cripps (presumably on instructions from London) on April 18, 1941, met with Vyshinsky, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, to whom he handed over his statement to Molotov in writing. Cripps' note read, in part:

"... *Since the time that I had the pleasure of talking with Your Excellency, time has passed, fraught with events ... As for relations between our two countries, they have not changed. The British Government still sees itself compelled **to regard the Soviet Union as Germany's main source of supply**, both on account of goods directly exported, and as regards goods transported through the Soviet Union to Germany from the Far East in the amount of approximately one thousand tons per day ...*

*I have no idea of asking Your Excellency a question about the intentions of the Soviet Government, for I am fully aware of the difficulties that could be involved in answering a question of this kind. But I have a desire to ask, in the light of the considerations outlined above, whether the Soviet government is now interested in putting into effect an **immediate improvement in its political and economic relations** with the British government, or, conversely, the Soviet*

*the government will be satisfied that these relations **retain their present, completely negative, character until the end of the war** (here and above, it was emphasized by me. - M.S.). If the answer to the first part of the question is satisfactory, then, in my opinion, no time should be wasted so that such an improvement will serve the benefit of one side or the other ... "[121].*

The answer to these questions seemed so obvious to Vyshinsky that he decided to abandon his usual diplomatic restraint and immediately expressed his own opinion : *between us and the British Government, as I already explained to Cripps in a conversation with him on March 22 on a similar occasion. Moreover, the note even contains places that are completely unacceptable to us... On the issue of the inviolability and security of the USSR, I told Cripps that the USSR **itself would take care of this, without the help of advisers** (emphasis added by me. - M.S.)... I rejected Cripps's attempts to challenge our right to trade with Germany and with any other state, declaring that this is our business and only ours ... "[121].* On June 5, 1941, Ambassador Cripps left Moscow "for consultation with his government." As a result, on the eve of the beginning of the Soviet-German war, Great Britain in the USSR was represented only by a charge d'affaires, secretary of the British embassy Bagdaley. His first meeting with Vyshinsky (Molotov probably did not consider it possible to stoop to talking to the secretary of the embassy)

took place on June 16, 1941, a week before the start of the war. The main subject of discussion was the famous TASS Report of June 13, 1941, in which the rumors about the imminent start of the Soviet-German war were declared "clumsily concocted propaganda of forces hostile to the USSR and Germany", and in the first lines of the Message, the increased dissemination of these obviously false rumors for some reason associated with the name of Stafford Cripps. "... At the request of Bagdaley, I received him at 17:00. 10 minutes. Bagdaley said that he came to me as Deputy People's Commissar on his first visit ... Further, Bagdaley stated that the TASS report (as he presents) has two main provisions: firstly, the report indicates that there are no negotiations between the USSR and Germany there was, and secondly, that there were no grounds for expressing concern in connection with the movements of German troops.

*To my question, who does Bagdalei mean when he speaks of expressing concern, Bagdaley answered - the USSR.*

*To this I replied to Bagdaley that. as can be seen from the TASS report, **there is no reason for the USSR to show any concern. Others may be worried** (emphasized by me. - M.S.)" [121].* Even less were Moscow on ceremony with its future main ally. "I will

*not dwell on our relations with the United States of America, if only because nothing good can be said about them. (Laughter) We have learned that some people in the United States do not like the successes of Soviet foreign policy in the Baltics (as in the text. - MS). But, to be honest, we are of little interest in this circumstance (Laughter, applause.), since we cope with our tasks even without the help of these disgruntled gentlemen. (Laughter, applause.)" [70].*

So fun was the people's deputies, deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 1, 1940, when they "heard and approved" the report of the head of the government Molotov on the foreign policy of the USSR. The US ambassador in Moscow was treated harshly, without jokes. So, on June 5, 1941 (on the very day when Cripps left Moscow, not salty slurping), Comrade Lozovsky, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, "reprimanded" (this is the term he uses in his report) the American

Ambassador Steingardt in full: "... The government ~~USA~~ ~~to~~ ~~confiscated~~ ~~the~~ ~~Bank of the USSR~~ (this term was used by Comrade Lozovsky to designate the gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Baltic states that were stored in American banks), seized the ships of the Baltic republics and not only did not liquidate the missions and consulates of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, but recognizes these puppet envoys and consuls as representatives of non-existent governments ... After I "reprimanded" Steingardt, he

began to complain that he was not invited to discuss questions relating to relations between the two parties, and this partly explains the situation. **He never spoke to Comrade. Stalin** (emphasis mine. - M.S.), and spoke with Comrade Molotov two or three times and only on minor issues ... According to Steingardt, in the next 12 months, and some believe, in the next 2-3 weeks, the Soviet Union will experience the greatest crisis. He is surprised that in such a difficult time the Soviet Union does not want to strengthen its relations with the United States ...

To this I replied that the Soviet Union was very calm about all sorts of rumors about an attack on its borders. The Soviet Union will meet fully armed anyone who tries to violate its borders. If there were such people who would try to do this, then the day of the attack on the Soviet Union would be the most unfortunate in the history of the country that attacked the USSR ... "[ 121]. The relations of the

USSR with Britain and the USA retained their "quite negative character" right up to the first days of the Soviet-German war. And this is very strange, given that the Big Turn in Stalin's strategic plans took place not after June 22, 1941, but two months before this "most unfortunate day" in the history of the USSR. It is impossible to name the exact date

of the "turn", but of course it is. and was not. The reassessment of the situation and the development of a new plan of action did not happen overnight. Nevertheless, April 13, 1941, can be called a certain, rather conditional, time mark. On this day, a major event of world significance took place (in Moscow, the Neutrality Pact between the USSR and Japan was signed - an agreement that untied Stalin's hands to act on West), and there was also a small episode at the Moscow railway station, which, however, attracted close attention of politicians and diplomats. In the report, which the German Ambassador on the same day marked "Urgent! Secret! sent to Berlin, this strange episode was described as follows: "... Obviously unexpectedly for both the Japanese and the Russians, Stalin and Molotov suddenly appeared and in an emphatically friendly manner greeted Matsuoka and the Japanese who were present there and wished them a pleasant journey. Then Stalin loudly asked about me and, finding me, came up, put his arm around my shoulders and said:



*"We must remain friends, and now you must do everything for this!" Then Stalin turned to the acting German military attaché, Colonel Krebs, and, after making sure that he was German, told him: "We will remain friends with you in any case." Stalin, no doubt, greeted Colonel Krebs and me in this way deliberately and thereby consciously attracted the general attention of the large public present there .*

Demonstrative hugs were soon supplemented by other equally demonstrative actions. Embassies and diplomatic missions of countries defeated and occupied by the Wehrmacht were closed in Moscow. The embassy of the same Yugoslavia was no exception, on the friendship agreement with which, as they say, "the ink has not yet dried." In May 1941, the Soviet Union obligingly recognized the pro-German government of Iraq, which came to power through a military coup. Questions of economic cooperation were also resolved in the most benevolent spirit towards Germany. The memorandum of the German Foreign Ministry dated May 15, 1941 noted: *"Negotiations with the First Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the USSR were held by Krutikov in a very constructive spirit ... I get the impression that we could present economic demands to Moscow, even going beyond the scope of the agreement from January 10, 1941 ... At this time, the volume of raw materials stipulated by the contract is delivered by the Russians punctually, despite the fact that it costs them great effort; contracts, especially in relation to grain, are carried out remarkably ... "* [70]. May 5, 1941 Stalin, unexpectedly for everyone, appointed himself head of government

(Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR).

It is hardly necessary to explain that even before May 5, Comrade Stalin, being just one of the many deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, had absolute power. And until May 5, 1941, Comrade Molotov, being the nominal head of the government, coordinated any step, any decision, any foreign policy statement with the will of Stalin. For many years, Stalin ruled the country, feeling no need to formalize his real status as the sole dictator. And if on May 5, 1941, such a strange act was nevertheless committed, then it is difficult to find any explanation for this, except for Stalin's immodest desire to leave his (and not Comrade Molotov's) signature on orders and documents that will forever change the course of world history.

The aged Count Schulenburg was completely fascinated by the suddenly flourishing Soviet-German friendship (by the way, in 1944 the former German ambassador to the USSR was executed for participating in a conspiracy against Hitler, so his "naive gullibility" could not be as naive as seems). On May 24, 1941, in another report to Berlin, he writes: "The fact that the foreign policy of the USSR is primarily aimed at preventing a clash with Germany is proved by the position taken by the Soviet government **in recent weeks** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), tone the Soviet press, which examines all events concerning Germany in an unobjectionable manner, and in compliance with economic agreements..." [70]. Hitler unfortunately. was not so trusting. He

correlated the unexpectedly developed loyalty of Moscow with information coming through intelligence channels about

strategic deployment of the Red Army and assessed the situation quite adequately. Started in December 1940, preparations for the invasion of the USSR reached the finish line in the spring of 1941. On April 30, 1941, Hitler set the start date for Operation Barbarossa (June 22) and the date for the railroads to switch to the maximum military traffic schedule (May 23). On June 8, the tasks according to the invasion plan were brought to the attention of the army commanders, on June 10 they were informed of the start date of the operation. On the evening of June 21, in a letter to Mussolini, Hitler outlined his decision in the following words: "Under these conditions, I decided to put an end to the hypocritical game of the Kremlin ..." [70].

This was the general course of events in big politics, against which relations developed (more precisely, the conflict escalated) between the USSR and Finland. A plausible and reasoned reconstruction of the motives and actions of the Soviet leadership in the first half of 1941 is hardly possible in the conditions of the secrecy of information that exists to this day. Once again, we remind the reader that almost the entire array of documents of units, formations, military districts and the high command of the Red Army for the first half of the year (until June 22) 1941 was removed from the archival funds of the RGVA and TsAMO available to independent researchers. As for the "Special Folders" declassified at the beginning of the 21st century, the minutes of the meetings of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the documents of the Defense Committee (KO) under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, their study suggests that these highest government bodies were mainly engaged in supply and marketing and production issues. Judging by the declassified materials, it is hard to believe that the Politburo of the Central Committee and the Defense Committee had some relation to the adoption of the most important military and political decisions. A typical example. "Special folders" of the meetings of the Politburo of the Central Committee for June 1940 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 27, 28) contain a single mention of the occupation of the three Baltic countries that took place this month, namely, on June 19, adopted the decision to release to the troops performing "special tasks" an additional number of matches, shag and smoking paper [144]. The presentation of the content of this "special task" is not entrusted even to the top secret "Special Folders". Of course, "there is a

hole in the old woman." They couldn't hide everything. The Soviet bureaucratic machine produced, multiplied and sent to thousands of recipients such gigantic mountains of documents that it was beyond the power of this machine to completely seize and destroy evidence. Something has survived, some erased traces of the most important decisions are sometimes found in the most unexpected, "non-core" funds. In full measure, all of the above applies to the "Finnish component" of the military-political plans of the Stalinist leadership. Without even trying to compose a coherent picture of events from an extremely insufficient number of "mosaic fragments", we will cite some of the documents and facts that have become available, supplementing them with information gleaned from the works of domestic and foreign historians. On November 27, 1940 (that is, just two days after the ill-fated date of November 25), Finnish

President K. Kallio submitted a petition to the State Council for his voluntary resignation. This was preceded by events that seemed more appropriate in a mystical thriller than in reality. On the eve of the conclusion of the Moscow Treaty of March 12, 1940, President Kallio, signing the powers

Finnish delegation to conclude an agreement on predatory Stalinist terms, uttered in a fit of temper the fatal phrase: "Let the hand that signed such a document wither away." In August 1940, Kallio fell seriously ill, he suffered a stroke, after which his right arm was paralyzed, his health continued to deteriorate, and on the eve of Christmas, Kallio died suddenly on the platform of the Helsinki railway station from a second stroke [25].

After Kallio's resignation, early presidential elections in Finland were assigned 19 December 1940

Of course, this could not pass by the attention of the Soviet leadership. The actual source of information about the conversations that took place in Moscow are the memoirs of Yu.K. Paasikivi (at that time - Ambassador to the USSR, and in 1946-1956 - President of Finland). But we will give a brief retelling of them in the presentation of the leading Russian specialist in the history of Soviet-Finnish relations, who worthily continues the glorious traditions of Soviet historiography: *"Two weeks before the elections, on December 6, 1940, Paasikivi was invited to Molotov. During the conversation, the people's commissar stated: "We do not want to interfere in your affairs, and **we do not make any hint about the candidacy of the new president** of Finland, but we are closely following the preparations for these elections. Whether Finland wants peace with the Soviet Union will be clear from who is elected president." Further, Molotov **firmly stated that the USSR was categorically opposed to such candidates** as Tanner, Mannerheim or Svinhufvud ... Thus, the Soviet leadership clearly expressed (here and above it was emphasized by me. - M.S.) its position.*

*Moreover, as noted in Paasikivi's memoirs, at one of the subsequent conversations in an informal manner, at the moment when the Finnish envoy was already leaving the office, Molotov unexpectedly said to him in conclusion: "We are glad to see you here, but we would also welcome you with pleasure in as the Finnish President"... Apparently, the wish that Paasikivi*

*became the President of Finland in 1940 testified to the fact that Moscow still continued to hope for the opportunity to coordinate Finland's foreign policy line.*

*Nevertheless, in Helsinki, it was considered most convenient as president Finland was Ryti" [155].*

In the last remark, the Russian professor, no doubt, made a mistake. Voting during presidential elections took place not only in Helsinki, but in all cities, towns and villages in Finland. But, presumably, the hypothesis that the election results can be determined not by apparatus intrigues in the capital, but by the people's will, still seems completely unrealistic to the Russian social scientist. As for the verb "coordinate" used above, this, I hope, is just a typo. You can coordinate something with something, but Stalin, in the person of Molotov, wanted to "correct", i.e. to correct Finland's foreign policy line in the "most convenient" direction for him. But this time, an attempt at gross interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country failed, and Risto Ryti was elected president, who had previously adequately performed the duties of prime minister during the hardest period of the "winter war" for Finland and the months of "cold peace" that followed (Ryti took over head of government on the second day of the war, December 1, 1939).

At the beginning of 1941, the conflict around the Petsamo nickel flared up with renewed vigor. Moscow demanded the transfer of the mines to a joint venture in which 50% of the shares would belong to the Soviet side. Finland refused. The Soviet leadership tried to "correct" Helsinki's position using economic pressure combined with political blackmail. The USSR unilaterally denounced the trade agreement concluded in the summer of 1940 and stopped the supply of goods, including grain.

One glance at the geographical map is enough to assess the possible consequences of such a step. Finland is a rich country. There is a lot of wood, cellulose, the same nickel. Humans, however, cannot eat paper and stainless steel. Even with a good harvest of its own, Finland was forced to import about 20 thousand tons of grain per month, not to mention gasoline, coal, rubber, textiles and other types of industrial raw materials. After the occupation of Norway and the establishment of the actual dominance of the German fleet in the Baltic Sea, Finland's transport communications with Europe and the USA were almost completely cut off. Theoretically, however, there was an ice-free port in Petsamo, but the absence of a railway line connecting Petsamo with the railway network of central and southern Finland minimized the role of the polar "window to the world" even in peacetime. In the conditions of a fierce war that unfolded in 1941 on sea lanes (including in the North Sea), there were fewer and fewer people who wanted to bring a cargo ship to Petsamo.

The stubbornness with which Stalin, Molotov and Co. tried to "press Finland against the wall" is worthy of surprise, **not realizing and not noticing at the same time that there is a "door" in the "wall" through which they pushed Finland.** This "door" led to closer and closer cooperation between the social democratic country and the Nazi Third Reich. It was hard to think of a better gift to Hitler than the suspension of grain supplies to Finland from the USSR. In the situation that arose at the beginning of 1941, Germany immediately "turned its shoulder" to Finland, which found itself on the verge of famine. According to Mannerheim, already in the spring of 1941, *"90 percent of the country's total imports came from Germany" [22]*. Is it necessary to prove that such a degree of economic dependence de facto deprived Finland of the status of a sovereign and neutral state. However, it was precisely this - the elimination of Finnish sovereignty - that was the invariable goal of Stalin's policy, however, due to the extreme incompetence and short-sightedness (in Russian, one can say in short and simpler - stupidity) of the Kremlin rulers, Finland did not at all turn into a "brotherly Soviet Karelo-Finland", and to the protectorate of Germany ...

An attempt to organize a trade blockade was supplemented by political pressure. On January 18, Moscow recalled its ambassador from Helsinki. In "diplomatic language" the recall of the ambassador means the last step before breaking off diplomatic relations and the penultimate one before the outbreak of war. At least, this is how Paasikivi assessed the situation (*"The Soviet Union will not fail to use force against us if the problems are not resolved"*). A similar opinion was expressed in his memoirs by Lieutenant General (in the winter of 1941 - Colonel, Chief of Staff of the 14th Army) L.S. Svirsky. He recalls that, having learned about the ongoing negotiations with Finland, he was very surprised: "Why buy if the war will start soon and we will return Petsamo to ourselves?" [148].

On January 23, 1941, a meeting of the country's top leadership was held at the Mannerheim House (President Ryti, Prime Minister Rangel, and Chief of the General Staff Heinrichs were present). Mannerheim, referring to intelligence data on **the beginning of the concentration of Soviet troops near the border of Finland**, proposed to immediately begin at least partial mobilization. The lack of information about the plans and operational regroupings of the troops of the Leningrad Military District in January-February 1941 does not allow us to either confirm or refute the validity of Mannerheim's fears. Be that as it may, the decision to start mobilization was not made at that time. On the other hand, completely bewildered Pvasikivi offered to give Stalin - out of harm's way - the entire region of nickel mines [26]. Having learned that the government is discussing such ways of "pacifying" the eastern neighbor. On February 10, 1941, Mannerheim announced to the president his intention to resign from the post of commander-in-chief if the capitulation policy was put into practice. An acute internal political crisis erupted in Finland. On February 20, Paasikivi resigned and was recalled from Moscow to his homeland. Thus, diplomatic relations between Finland and the USSR from the end of February to mid-April 1941 were actually interrupted.

The tough position of Marshal Mannerheim (who in October 1939, on the contrary, most persistently advised politicians to come to terms with Stalin without bringing matters to an armed conflict) was explained not only by the tragic experience of the "winter war". According to M. Jokipii, through several secret channels, the Germans brought to the attention of Mannerheim information about the course of the November negotiations of Molotov in Berlin [26]. Knowing the position of Germany, Mannerheim suggested that the Soviet Union would not risk the ultimate aggravation of relations with Hitler over the issue of the Petsamo mines. The lack of reliable information, again, does not allow us to answer the question of whether the intransigence shown by Finland was the reason for the peaceful resolution of the "nickel crisis", or whether Stalin did not plan to go beyond the bluff and the "war of nerves" in the winter of 1941.

The spring of 1941 began without outward signs of conflict. Routine preparations for the war with Finland continued at the headquarters and troops. In the fund of the intelligence department of the 5th air division (headquarters in Vyborg), the following documents are

found: *"To the Chief of Staff of the 5th AD, Vyborg,*

*27.02.41. At the same time, I am forwarding maps of the territory of Finland with cartographically imprinted fortifications according to the data of the RO (intelligence department - M.S.) of the LVO headquarters as of 1.12.40. [149]. Further in the text - a list of 30 cards. "To the*

*Chief of Staff of the 5th AD, Vyborg. 02/28/41. At the*

*same time, I am sending intelligence material "Brief information about the theater and the armed forces of Finland", copy. No. 6, edition of the RO headquarters of the LVO. There is a resolution on the letter: "To Major Gribovsky. Work out and report the conclusions" [50].*

*"To the Chief of Staff of the 123rd Rifle Division, 43rd Rifle Division,*

*5th SAD, 24th KAP, 05/16/41. At the same time, I am sending the material - a report on the armed forces of Finland for use in practical work on the study of a potential enemy. Head of the 2nd department of the headquarters of the 50th SC captain Kovantsev*

*" [151]. "To the Chief of Staff of the 5th AD, Vyborg.*

*05/16/41. At the same time, I am sending photographs of the city and the Lappeenranta airfield" [152].*

According to the Finnish historian K. Geust, *"during the first half of 1941, the Finnish border guard registered 85 overflights of Soviet aircraft over its territory" [145]*. Taking into account the huge length of the border and the complete absence of radars in the Finnish air defense system, it can be assumed that the total number of reconnaissance flights of Soviet aviation over the territory of Finland was even greater ... Some plans continued to be worked out at the headquarters of the Red

Army. And although we do not know their content, some conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the "Control plan for conducting gatherings of senior command personnel, games, field trips and exercises in the districts in 1941" published in the second half of the 90s. (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 242, l. 134-151) [121]. The document was approved by Lieutenant General Malandin, Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, on April 4, 1941. A careful study of this multi-page document reveals several "groups" of simultaneous events, the content of which is quite consistent with the meetings of the Red Army high command known from other sources.

First of all, one should note such an important event as the "operational strategic game conducted by the General Staff." The plan for April 4, 1941 quite clearly fixes the intention to hold three such games: - with the command of the

Far Eastern Front. Transbaikalian and Siberian districts in the period from 1 to 15 April 1941;

- with the command of the Leningrad and Arkhangelsk districts in the period from May 1 to May 15,

1941; - with the command of the Kiev and Odessa districts in the period from July 1 to July 15, 1941. It is worth noting that immediately after the end of the last game, in the period from July 15 to July 30, it was planned to conduct "interdistrict air force exercises" of Kiev, Odessa and Kharkov military districts. It is noteworthy that neither the Western nor the Baltic Special Military Districts were involved in the operational-strategic games, and the Air Force of the Western OVO were supposed to participate in interdistrict exercises from August 1 to 15 together with the Air Force of the Moscow Military District and Air Defense of Moscow. All this can hardly be interpreted in any other way than the final rejection of the "northern option" of the general operational plan (delivering the main strike in East Prussia and northern Poland) and the in-depth development of the "southern option" (with the main strike in southern Poland, Slovakia and Romania).

Returning to the "Finnish direction", we find that in the period from March 1 to March 15, 1941, a "field observation trip" was planned in the Leningrad District. On the same dates (March 1-15), in the Oryol VO it was planned to *"participate in a viewing field trip of the Leningrad VO"*, and in the Ural VO - *"participation in a viewing field trip"*, however, it is not known with whom. However, an analysis of the entire text of the "Control Plan" shows that during the specified period, field trips were carried out only in the Leningrad Military District and the ArkhVO. Geographically, the Leningrad, Orlovsky and Ural districts do not even have common borders, but within the framework of the operational plan for the invasion of Finland ("considerations" of September 18, 1940 and a directive of November 25, 1940), they have a common task, to deploy four armies (7 -th and 23rd from the troops of the Leningrad District, the 20th at the base of the Orlovsky troops and the 22nd at the base

troops of the Ural districts) and advance as part of the North-Western Front from Vyborg and Sortavala to Helsinki and Mikkeli.

As part of the Northern Front (in accordance with the "Considerations" of September 18, 1940, this front was to be deployed on the basis of the Arkhangelsk Military District) from Alakurtti to Kemi and Oulu, the 21st Army was to advance, deployed on the basis of the Volga military district. And what? Turning to the "Control Plan", we find that in the Volga Military District, under the leadership of the General Staff, in the period from August 15 to August 30, *"an observation front-line field trip together with the Arkhangelsk Military District" was to be carried*

*out.* The plans for the training of the highest command staff were persistently carried out. *"In March, under the leadership of the Deputy Commissar of Defense, General K.A. Meretskov, a large multi-day operational game was held in the district,"* writes the former commander of the Leningrad District M.M. in his memoirs. Popov [194]. A field trip with the participation of the headquarters of the Leningrad, Orlovsky and Ural districts was also actually carried out by the General Staff in the period from March 13 to 20. As expected, during the trip the topic "Offensive operation in winter" was worked out [34]. You can find out about the tasks solved during the district and army field trips without even referring to the secret archives. In the official history of the "Order of Lenin of the Leningrad Military District" published in 1968, *we read: "Field trips on the Karelian Isthmus and the Kola Peninsula were instructive, during which the nature of the modern offensive operation and combat in the conditions of a wooded and swampy area was studied* (emphasized by me. — M.S.) *on the scale of the army, corps and division..."* [154]. Beginning in

mid-April, perfectly synchronous with the demonstrative change in Soviet-German relations. an unexpected warming began in the "Finnish direction". Finally, the ambassador of the Soviet Union returned to Finland, and this was already a new person: instead of Zotov, who diligently played the role of an "evil investigator", the "kind and accommodating" Orlov arrived in Helsinki. Comrade Orlov apparently charmed the Finnish politicians so much that even many decades later, Professor M. Jokipii writes: *"With the arrival of the new ambassador Orlov, a completely new stage of relations opened up."* E.T., a resident of Soviet intelligence in Finland, allegedly also achieved great success. Sinitsyn. According to his own memoirs and published reports of Soviet intelligence, in Moscow they received reports on the meetings of the government of Finland with almost verbatim accuracy, and mysterious unnamed "prominent political figures of Finland" served with Sinitsyn "on parcels", like a goldfish with a stupid old woman [ 156, 157]. Alas. the events of June 25, 1941, for some reason, the complete ignorance of the Soviet command about the real state and deployment of the Finnish and German troops is also shown, and it is precisely this ignorance that is used by some modern historians as a "good reason" justifying the completely inadequate actions of the Red Army ... But to this We will return to the issue later.

Simultaneously with the change of the ambassador in Helsinki, the radio station "Karelian-Finland" stopped inflammatory radio propaganda in Finnish. One of the Finnish communist defectors (see chapter 2.2) wrote about this. *"The Social Democrats are in admiration and consider this a concession on the part of the Soviet Union, just like*

*replacement of the ambassador" [158].* Moreover, in April 1941, the Soviet leadership brought to the attention of Helsinki that it no longer objected to the creation of a defensive alliance between Sweden and Finland! [34]. On May 14, Paasikivi returned to Moscow as the Ambassador of Finland. On May 30, 1941, Stalin invited the Finnish envoy to the Kremlin and told him verbatim the following: *"I will do you a personal friendly service. I will give 20,000 tons of grain, half of which Finland will receive immediately.* And this promise was fulfilled - the indicated amount of grain arrived in Finland before the start of the war [46]. The

fragmented mosaic of events of the last months of the world remains to be supplemented two notable passages.

In early June, the military base in Khanko was visited with an inspection by the commander of the KBF, Vice Admiral V.F. Tributs and the commander of the Leningrad Military District, Lieutenant General M.M. Popov. June 15 M.M. Popov signed a report sent to the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR, in which he expressed concern about the insufficient, in his opinion, defense capability of the base in Khanko and made a number of specific proposals for strengthening Khanko (deploy the 8th rifle brigade into a full-fledged division, form a separate artillery and machine gun and "tank" battalions, etc.). The report ended with the following phrase: *"All these measures must **be carried out no later than August 1, 1941*** (emphasized by me. - M.S.)" [159].

Above, in chapter 2.2, reports on the work of the party organizations of the Communist Party of Finland, compiled by Finnish communists who crossed the front line in September 1941, were mentioned. There were also excerpts from Comrade Reino V. Kosunen's report "On the Work of the Party Organizations in Helsinki and Kuopio". The report ended with the following self-critical remark:

*"We, the members of the party, were not at the level of international events at the time when the new war began. **Two weeks before the start of the war** between Germany - the Soviet Union and Finland (as in the text. - M.S.) I received a report from the party leadership on the assessment of the situation, because. I had to go on a party business trip to Korkila.* The

*report contained the following:*

*1. The war continues and spreads. This is not a lightning war. 2. The situation in Finland **is not expected to change until autumn*** (here and above underlined by me. - M.S.), *so the war is not yet expected. We, therefore, did not prepare for the war earlier than in the autumn" [160].* The

ability for self-criticism adorns a person - but in this case, Comrade Kosunen is unfair to himself and to the "party leadership." This party was not controlled from Helsinki, but from another place. The Finnish comrades could not work out any other estimates of the possible dates for the start of the "new war", except for those that came from Moscow (and they did not have the right to). So the blame for the fact that the Finnish communists **"prepared for war", which will begin "not earlier than autumn"**, does not lie with them ...



## Chapter 2.7

### VERY ACTIVE DEFENSE

On May 24, 1941, a many-hour meeting was held in Stalin's office, the participants of which, in addition to Stalin himself, were:

- Deputy Prime Minister and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov;
- People's Commissar for Defense Tymoshenko;
- Chief of the General Staff Zhukov and his first deputy. Head of the Operational Directorate Vatutin;
- Head of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force Zhigarev;
- commanders of the troops of the five western border districts (Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kyiv and Odessa), members of the Military Councils (commissars) and commanders of the Air Force of these five districts.

How do we know this? At the beginning of "perestroika", in 1990, the journal "Izvestia of the Central Committee of the CPSU" had the imprudence to publish a multi-page "Journal of records of persons accepted by Comrade. Stalin", in which, day after day, year after year, everyone who entered and left the leader's office was recorded. Thanks to this "Journal of Recording Faces", the very fact of the Conference on May 24, 1941 became known, as well as the fact that there were no other equally representative meetings of the top military-political leadership of the USSR - neither a few months before May 24, nor after **this dates up to the start of the war**. That, in fact, is the entire "mass of information" available

today. Neither Soviet nor Russian official historiography uttered a word about the subject of discussion and the decisions taken on May 24. Nothing was reported in their memoirs by the few participants in that Conference who lived to see Stalin's death. Declassified already at the beginning of the 21st century, the Special Folders of the minutes of the meetings of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks for May 1941 (RGASPI, f.17. op. 162, d. 34-35) also do not contain even the slightest mention of this Meeting. And only Marshal Vasilevsky, in his article, which has lain in archival silence for almost 27 years, recalls: "*A few weeks before the attack on us by fascist Germany, unfortunately I can't name the exact date, all the documentation on the district operational plans was transferred by the General Staff to the command and the*

*headquarters of the respective military districts*" [162]. Unfortunately, "all documentation" on operational plans has not been declassified to this day. Chronologically, the last known document of Soviet military planning is "Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies", compiled no earlier than May 15, 1941 (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 237, pp. 1-15). Published 15 years ago (in the 1st-2nd issues of the "Military Historical Journal" for 1992), this document immediately found itself at the center of a fierce discussion. Perhaps this was due to the fact that readers who had not yet had time to wean themselves from the traditional myths of Soviet propaganda were shocked by the phrase: "*I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative to the German Command, preempt the enemy and attack the German army at that moment*

*when it will be in the stage of deployment and will not yet have time to organize the front and the interaction of the combat*

*arms" [121].* It is difficult to understand what could "scandalize the public" so much here - the desire to get ahead of the enemy and "under no circumstances give him the initiative to act" is only an elementary requirement of common sense. If there was some element of novelty in the May "Considerations". then it was expressed in the phrase preceding the sentence "preempt the enemy." Namely: "Germany has the ability to warn us in the deployment and deliver a surprise strike." In all other known variants of the plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army, there is no such phrase in content. This suggests that by mid-May 1941, the Soviet military leadership was already clearly aware that Germany's preparations for an attack on the USSR were in full swing. That is why the task is set to preempt the enemy, and for this, to immediately carry out a number of measures, "without which it is impossible to deliver a surprise strike against the enemy both from the air and on the ground" [121]. As regards the

actual operational plans, the planned grouping of troops, directions of strikes, timing and milestones, the May "Considerations" completely (in some cases - word for word) repeat all the previous, starting from September 1940, known versions of the plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army. Army:

*"a) deliver the main blow by the forces of the Southwestern Front in the direction of Krakow, Katowice, cutting off Germany from its southern allies; b) deliver an auxiliary strike by the left wing of the Western Front in the direction of Sedlec, Demblin, with the aim of pinning down the Warsaw grouping and assisting the Southwestern Front in defeating the enemy's Lublin grouping; c) to conduct **an active defense against Finland** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), East Prussia. Hungary and Rumania and be ready to strike against Rumania if the situation is favorable" [121].* On June 13, 1941,

Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Lieutenant General N.F. Vatutin compiled a certificate "On the deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the event of a war in the West" (TsAMO, f. 16A, op. 2951, d. 236. l. 65-69) [121]. The "Information" dated June 13 (and this is the last of the known pre-war documents of this kind) does not contain a single mention of the tasks and action plans of the troops. Only numbers, numbers of armies, stations for unloading troops, the required number of wagons and echelons. However, comparing the "Information" of June 1941 with the May "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan" and, most importantly, with the actual situation of the Red Army troops as of June 22, 1941, one cannot help but be convinced that the real concentration of troops took place in direct accordance with the May "considerations". It is the actual redeployment of troops, the real creation of strike groups, the formation of which corresponded to pre-war plans (in particular, the May "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan"), which is the most important and irrefutable proof that these plans were not at all the subject of "desk research", **but consistent firmly implemented.**

The amount of work done turned out to be so great that, despite many years of "cleansing the information field", some documents and facts became known. For example, recently declassified documents of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR reveal a top secret "List of issues to be

consideration at meetings of the Defense Committee", drawn up on April 12, 1941. It is intended, in particular, to consider the following issues: "p. 14.

On the monetary allowance of the personnel of the Red Army. of the Navy and the NKVD troops **for wartime** ... p. 16. *On the creation of a commission for granting **deferrals from conscription for mobilization and during the war** , and on the procedure for granting deferrals*" [169]. On May

10, 1941, the Defense Committee approved the "List of issues to be considered at the meeting" (whom with whom is not indicated). Item 14 of the agenda reads as follows: *"On additional cost estimates **for the period of mobilization and the first month of the war**" [170].* On May 12, 1941, the "List of Questions in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks" was prepared. Item 7: *"On the work of the Civil Air Fleet*

*(Civil Air Fleet) **in wartime**" [171].* The following document deserves special attention. June 4, 1941 People's Commissar of the Navy N.G. Kuznetsov sends N.A. Voznesensky memorandum No. 1146. The classification of the document is "top secret, of special importance." And this is indeed a document of particular importance for the historian - for the first time, absolutely specific dates appear next to the phrase "wartime" in it:

*"At the same time, I present a statement of the needs of the People's Commissariat of the Navy for mine and torpedo weapons **for wartime from 1.07.41 to 01.01.43**. I ask for your instructions on increasing the allocated quantities of mine and torpedo weapons, given that the need for them in the 2nd half of 1941 is 50% of the total requirement for the period up to 1.01.43.* [172].

As you can see, the People's Commissar of the Navy plans to fight for at least a year and a half. Moreover, the operational plan for this great ocean war in general terms has already been drawn up, otherwise N.G. Kuznetsov could not plan a specific distribution of the consumption of mine and torpedo weapons for each six months ...

Now let's return from the plans of the Great Campaign to the Soviet-Finnish confrontation. As part of the general plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army for the war with Germany, the Finnish border invariably remained a secondary **area of active defense**. The composition of the grouping and possible actions of the enemy were assessed as follows:

"Considerations" of September 18, 1940 . divisions **supported by 3-4 German divisions**; 2. to cover directions to Kuopio, Joensuu - up to 3 infantry. divisions; 3. to cover the Uleaborg direction (i.e., the Suomussalmi-Oulu direction) - up to 2 infantry. divisions; 4. in the Merkyarvi area (west of Salla) - up to 2 infantry. divisions; 5. in the Petsamo area - up to 2 infantry. divisions. *The final deployment of the Finnish army according to the indicated option can be*

*expect on the 20-25th day.*

*The probability of the concentration of significant forces of the Finnish army not **in the Vyborg-Leningrad direction, supported here by German divisions,***

*predetermines the possibility of active actions of the enemy in this direction.*

*In the future, at this theater, **the possibility** of auxiliary enemy strikes in the Petrozavodsk and Kandalaksha directions.*

The "refined" plan on March 11, 1941

*"... With regard to the Finnish army, the following plan is most likely deployment: 1.*

*To the front from the Gulf of Finland to Savonlinna - at least 6 infantry divisions, **supported by 5-6 divisions of the Germans.***

*2. To cover the directions to Kuopio, Joensuu - up to 3 infantry divisions. 3. To cover the Uleaborg direction - up to 2 infantry divisions. 4. In the area of Myarkyarvi - up to 2-3 infantry divisions. 5. In the Petsamo area - up to 1-2 infantry divisions. The final deployment of the Finnish army should be expected on the 20-25th day. The probability of concentrating significant forces of the Finnish army in **the Vyborg-Leningrad** direction, **supported here by German divisions**, predetermines the possibility of active enemy operations in this direction.*

In the May (1941) "Considerations" about the alleged enemy grouping in the Finnish direction, only one phrase was said: "Probable allies of Germany can put up against the USSR: Finland - up to 20 infantry divisions."

Thus, the general assessment of the situation on the northern flank of the common front remained largely unchanged. The

only thing that can be noted is a slight increase in the expected size of the Finnish army (from 15 to 20 infantry divisions) and the grouping of German troops in southern Finland (from 3-4 to 5-6 divisions). Active offensive actions of the enemy (Finns and Germans) were expected mainly on the Karelian Isthmus ("in the Vyborg-Leningrad direction"). To the north of Lake Ladoga, the possibility of inflicting "auxiliary strikes" by the enemy was only "not ruled out", and in March 1941 even this reservation disappeared. The May "Considerations" do not contain any mention of a possible enemy offensive in the area of the Finnish border.

Comparing these assumptions with the currently known real state of affairs, it can be noted that if the Red Army command was not mistaken in assessing the number of enemy troops (the Finnish army was deployed as part of 16 infantry divisions, two jaegers and one "armored" brigade), then the idea of operational The plans of the enemy were absolutely fantastic. There was not a single German division in southern Finland ("*on the front from the Gulf of Finland to Savonlinna*") at all, the Finns delivered the main blow in July 1941 in Ladoga Karelia (i.e. "*on the Petrozavodsk direction*"), and almost all German divisions (4 out of 5) were concentrated in the Arctic, i.e. where their appearance **was not expected in any of the variants of the pre-war plans** of the command of the Red Army. Let us emphasize this important remark with three bold lines; it will come in handy later on. The combat operations of the Soviet troops on the Finnish front were presented to the authors

plans for the strategic deployment of the Red Army as follows;

"Considerations" of September 18, 1940

*"... Considering the balance of forces given earlier, our actions in the north in the west should be reduced mainly to the active defense of our borders.*

*For operations in the northwest, it is intended to have a Northern Front consisting of three armies and a separate rifle corps in the Estonian SSR. In total, 13 rifle divisions are assigned for operations as part of the*

*Northern Front. 2 sec.*

*rifle brigades; 3 tank brigades;*

*20 aviation regiments,*

*and a total of 970 tanks and 1050 aircraft. "Considerations"*

*in May 1941 "... Northern*

*Front (LVO) - 3 armies, consisting of 15 rifle, 4 tank and 2 motorized divisions, and a total of 21 divisions, 18 regiments of aviation and the Northern Navy, with the main tasks of defending .Leningrad, the port of Murmansk, the Kirov railway. roads and, together with the Baltic Navy, ensure our complete dominance in the waters of the Gulf of Finland.*

*For the same purpose, it is planned to transfer to the Northern Front from PribOVO - the defense of the northern and northwestern coast of the Estonian*

*SSR. Thus, in the Finnish direction, the approximate equality of the forces of the parties was assumed (in terms of the number of rifle divisions, the enemy may even have some superiority, but the Red Army will have a significant superiority in aviation and tanks). Taking into account the presence of a strip of long-term fortifications in the Vyborg, Keksgolm and Sortavala directions, this was considered quite enough to solve the problems of active defense. For the offensive and defeat of the Finnish army, according to the plans of September 18 and November 25, 1940 (see Chapter 2.4.), It was planned to attract **incomparably large forces** (46 rifle divisions, at least 9 tank and motorized brigades, one mechanized corps, i.e. two tank and one motorized divisions, 78 aviation regiments with a total of 3900 aircraft). Such forces were to be deployed at the expense of the troops of four military districts (Leningrad, Arkhangelsk, Ural, Orlovsky), and even with the involvement of some units and formations from the Moscow, Volga, Kharkov and North Caucasian districts.*

The general conclusion can be formulated as follows: Finland seemed to the Soviet command to be a very serious enemy, to defeat which it was necessary to create a grouping of troops so large that a simultaneous offensive against the Wehrmacht in the southwest (in Poland and Romania) and against the Finnish army in the north was impossible. In other words, the invasion and occupation of Finland (according to the operational plans of the autumn of 1940 or similar) **was possible either before or after** the successful completion of the main task: the defeat of German forces in southeastern Europe.

In this regard, it is worth noting one incidental moment. The publishers of the "Refined Strategic Deployment Plan" dated March 11, 1941 made an unfortunate oversight, and in the table showing the composition of the group of Red Army troops "for conducting operations in the west and on the Finnish front." there was a typo. In the column "number" of rifle divisions it is written: - 158 in the west;

- 133 on the

Finnish front;

- 171 total [120].

It would seem that even a second grader should be clear at first glance that instead of the number 133 there should be the number 13. A person familiar with some of the basics of military affairs and the history of the Soviet-Finnish wars should understand and know that the 291st Rifle Division in The Red Army simply did not exist, that it was technically impossible to deploy 133 divisions in the Finnish theater of operations, that even the plans for the decisive defeat of the Finnish army and the occupation of the entire country involved the involvement of three times smaller forces, and the plans for "active defense" were constantly present in the number of 13-15 rifle divisions. Finally, it is completely unrealistic for the wars of the middle of the 20th century to create a strike force consisting of 133 rifle and only one (!) Panzer divisions (namely, such a structure emerges from the ill-fated table). Nevertheless, the author of a huge number of books and articles on the history of the Soviet-Finnish wars, St. Petersburg professor Comrade V.N. Baryshnikov made another scientific discovery out of an unfortunate technical typo (quoted with the exact preservation of style, i.e. tongue-tiedness, of the original);

*"... Without disclosing in terms of defining specific tasks in these areas, however, the number of troops expected to conduct combat operations was indicated. Moreover, in the opinion of the Soviet command, a significant number of troops should have been deployed on the "Finnish Front" - 135 rifle divisions. This number was almost three times higher than that which was determined for conducting military operations against Finland in the autumn of 1940, which shows how seriously the information that was received about the beginning of the concentration (in March 1941 (???) was assessed. - M .S.) of German troops on Finnish territory.*

*On the other hand, of course, such a number of divisions planned to be deployed in the zone bordering Finland indicated that in the event of a war, Moscow did not at all intend to carry out purely defensive military operations here. Moreover, these forces, obviously, were expected to be used, moreover, not only against the Finnish army, which, according to Soviet estimates, could "put up to 18 infantry divisions against the Soviet Union ..." [155].* On the basis of the Leningrad Military District, the Northern Front was

deployed with headquarters in Pargolovo (a northern suburb of Leningrad). The composition of the Northern Front (S.F.) included three armies: the 23rd, 7th and 14th. All these armies already existed by the time the cover plan was drawn up (the 14th Army was deployed in the Murmansk region even before the "winter war"). In addition to the units and formations that were part of the three armies, directly subordinate to the command of S.f. there was the 1st mechanized corps (without the 1st tank division, which will be discussed later) and three rifle divisions (70th rifle division, 177th rifle division, 191st rifle division). The 8th Special Rifle Brigade still remained on the Hanko Peninsula. Almost all (with the

exception of the 237th Rifle Division, which arrived in the area of Loymola Station in the early 20th of June) formations of the future Northern Front were already part of the Leningrad District. An inter-district redeployment of forces to the Leningrad Military District was not planned, which once again confirms the version that, as part of the general plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army, which began to be implemented in May 1941, the Northern Front was assigned a modest role as a defense sector. Almost all rifle divisions (with the exception of the 115th and 71st Karelian-Finnish)

participated in the "winter war", respectively, the theater of operations and the alleged enemy were familiar. The "Finnish front", which

is huge in length, can be conditionally divided into four sections (see maps No. 6 and 7). On the Karelian Isthmus and in the Ladoga Karelia (i.e. from the coast of the Gulf of Finland in the Virolahti region to Ilomantsi in Karelia), one could still speak of the presence of a continuous "front line". In northern Karelia (from Rebola to Salla) and on the Kola Peninsula (Kandalaksha-Murmansk) there were only a few "road directions" leading to the Murmansk railway, between which impenetrable forests, swamps and tundra stretched for hundreds of kilometers. It is worth noting that these "directions" were by no means a motorway, but a dirt road, at best with a gravel surface (an asphalt road on the Kandalaksha-Alakurtti section appeared only in 1997). In the summer of 1941, there were exactly five such directions: - Petsamo-Murmansk; - Salla-Alakurtti-Kandalaksha; - Kuusamo-Kestenga-Lukhi; - Suomussalmi-Ukhta-Kem; - Kuhmo-Reboly-Kochkoma.

The first three directions were covered by the 14th Army (headquarters in Murmansk). The army included the 42nd Rifle

Corps deployed in the Salla-Alakurtti area (122nd Rifle Division, 104th Rifle Division) and two divisions in the Murmansk direction (14th Rifle Division and 52nd Rifle Division). The direction of Kestenga-Lukhi was covered by only one (242nd) rifle regiment from the 104th rifle division. The Rebolsk and Ukhta directions were included in the cover section of the 7th Army

deployed in Ladoga Karelia (headquarters in the city of Suoyarvi). In fact, only one (54th) rifle division was allocated to these two directions. In Ladoga Karelia, in the strip from Kuolismaa to Lakhdengyukhya, two rifle divisions were deployed: the 71st Rifle Division and the 168th Rifle Division. The 237th Rifle Division was allocated to the army reserve. which in mid-June was transported by rail to st. Loimola.

The most powerful 23rd Army in the district was deployed on the Karelian Isthmus: the 19th Rifle Corps (142nd and 115th rifle divisions), the 50th rifle corps (43rd and 123rd divisions), the 10th mechanized corps (21 -I TD, 24th TD, 198th MD), 4 heavy artillery

regiments of the RGK. Now let's summarize the information about the composition of the troops that were supposed to be deployed in the Finnish theater of operations according to various plans of the Red Army command (in fact - "Considerations for deployment in the event of a war with Finland" dated September 18, 1940, memorandum "On the basics of strategic deployment" dated

	September 18 1940), in the	<b>Invasion plan (September 18, 1940)</b>	<b>Grand Plan (September 18, 1940)</b>
arctic	following table: In fact (June 1941), td - 1, ap sd - 3, ap RGK - 1 RGK - 1	sd - 4, sd - 4	sd - 4
North Karelia	sd - 1	sd - 12	sd - 1
Priladozhskaya Karelia 1	sd - 3, ap RGK -	sd - 6	sd - 7

Karelian Isthmus	sd - 15, td - 2, ap RGK - 4	sd - 17, tbr - 3, ap RGK - 12	sd - 4, tbr - 2
Front reserves	sd - 4, td - 1	sd - 5, td - 2	sd - 1
TOTAL:	sd - 17, td - 4, ap RGK - 6	sd - 43, td - 35, ap RGK - 13	sd - 12, td - 1, ap RGK - 1

Note: - motorized divisions from the mechanized corps are counted as rifle;

— two tank brigades are counted as one tank division; - the table does not include the 65th SC in Estonia and the 8th RAF on the Hanko Peninsula.

As you can see, the actual grouping of troops is much smaller than the forces that, according to the plan of September 18, 1940, were supposed to "destroy the main forces of the Finnish army" and occupy Helsinki "on the 35th day of the operation." On the other hand, the composition of forces allocated for the "active defense" of the Soviet-Finnish border increased slightly from September 1940 to May 1941. However, the most surprising feature of the May 1941 cover plan should be considered the appearance in the Arctic (in the direction of Salla- Alakurtti) of a tank division (1st TD from the 1st MK). At this point,

we should dwell in more detail. The commander of the 1st MK (from which the 1st TD was withdrawn) did not know anything about the tasks assigned to the division. The report of the headquarters of the 1st MK "On the fighting in the period from 22.6 to 24.7" (signed by the corps commander Major General Chernavsky in August 1941) says the following verbatim: "On June 17, by personal order of the chief of staff of the LenVO, Major General Nikishev *1 td was taken from the corps and sent to perform a special task, where it departed, plunging to st. Berezka (in the Pskov region). All contact with her has been lost since the moment she left the corps*" [175].

Report on the combat operations of the commander of the 1st Panzer Division. participant in the war in Spain and Finland, Hero of the Soviet Union Major General V.I. Baranova is sustained in much more energetic terms. His bewilderment (if not outrage) by the decision to send a tank division to Alakurtti V.I. Baranov formulates on the verge of what is generally permissible when discussing orders from a higher command: *"As for the use of a tank division in the area of Alakurtti, Kayral, Salla, it is completely inexpedient and ineffective due to the lack of room for maneuver even for tank units* (meaning that the terrain did not allow maneuvering not only by units, i.e. tank regiments, but even by small subunits.—MS). *This area is characterized by lake-marshy area. a large number of rocky cliffs and large arrays of stone boulders. The inexpediency of using a tank division in the Kandalaksha direction is all the more obvious since the jointly operating 42nd SC from the beginning of hostilities fought mainly defensive battles, and therefore the capabilities of the tank division were not used* (emphasized by me. - M.S.), *and the main its forces were not used ... The use of a tank division in this direction and*



*similar to it is impractical, especially in the presence of light tanks and armored cars" [176]. It's*

hard to disagree with this. Such use of tanks directly contradicted the requirements of the Field Manual of the Red Army (PU-39), which stated: *"The use of tanks must be massive. (p. 37) Great maneuverability, firepower and striking power of tanks should be fully used for active operations ... The main tasks of tanks in defense are: defeating the enemy who broke into the defensive zone, and first of all his tanks, destroying the enemy bypassing the flank (flanks) defense. (p. 391)." True, in those cases when the enemy had an overwhelming superiority in forces, and it became impossible to ensure "maneuverability" due to the lack of fuel, the tanks were buried in the ground and used by "separate ambushes". But in the Arctic, it will not be possible to bury a tank in the ground (permafrost, and the soil does not dig with a shovel), and the idea of transporting a tank division a thousand kilometers away just to bury it in the ground looks extremely ridiculous ...*

On the "anti-tank terrain" of the polar North, the light, high-speed BT tank inevitably lost its main quality - mobility. And there were never any other special advantages behind this combat vehicle with bulletproof armor and a small-caliber 45-mm cannon. For "defensive battles" it would be much easier and more effective in the same echelons (and to transport the bulky "economy" of a tank division from Pskov to Alakurtti, it took more than 25 echelons) to transfer several rifle divisions or heavy artillery regiments of the RGK armed with heavy howitzers of 152 mm caliber, and even better - of 203 mm caliber. In terms of the weight of the total volley, one artillery regiment of the RGK was two to three times superior to a division of light tanks, and granite boulders will not be covered from high-explosive shells weighing 43-100 kg.

Finally, such a concern of the Soviet command about covering the Salla-Alakurtti direction, which led to the decision to "dismantle" the 1st MK - the main reserve of the district command - and send one of the two tank divisions of the 1st mechanized corps to the Arctic, seems completely incomprehensible and unjustified. As noted above, two, at most three, Finnish infantry divisions were expected in the Merkjärvi-Salla direction. The appearance of German units there in the spring of 1941 was not expected at all. On the other hand, on the Karelian Isthmus, on the front of the 23rd Army, the presence of *"at least 6 infantry divisions supported by 5-6 German divisions" was expected*. That's it there, in the Vyborg-Leningrad direction, where active offensive operations of a numerically superior enemy were expected, and the tank (mechanized) corps in the reserve of the front could be used.

Nevertheless, a reasonable, quite logical explanation of the reasons for the appearance of the 1st tank in the Alakurtti area lies, as they say, "on the surface." It's just that you need to look at the surface of the earth - or a geographical map - not from left to right, from Salla to Alakurtti, but from right to left, from Salla to Rovaniemi. For the convenience of a "remote inspection", you can use the "Military Guide to Finland", prepared by the USSR People's Commissariat of Defense back in 1937. On the issue of interest to us, you can read the following: "Route No. No. 1 was already captured during the "winter

war", and we are not interested in it now). *Kuoyujärvi-Kemijärvi (99 km). Throughout the entire section there is a highway, ditched road, with an average width of 4.5–5 m; the canvas is covered with small crushed stone and sand, well-trodden, kept in good condition. The road is equipped with petrol stations. There are a significant number of bridges in the area. The bridges are in good condition...* Section #3. *Kemijärvi–Vikajärvi–*

*Rovaniemi (99 km). The road throughout the entire section is highway, ditched, 4.5–5 m wide. The roadbed is gravel and sand, in good condition. The road is equipped with gas stations, there is an auto connection ... Conclusions. The road is suitable for the*

*movement of all branches of the military" [178]. So, from the border to Rovaniemi (the administrative center of northern Finland) - 200 km along an improved dirt road with gravel. For a "furious march" on Rovaniemi, a panzer division armed with fast BT tanks could be considered the best tool of war available. We will not clutter up the text with an analysis of the tactical and technical characteristics of BT tanks (dozens of books and hundreds of articles have been written about this), but we will immediately give several real examples of marches performed by "bateshki" in a combat situation.*

The first episode of the combat use of BT tanks was the war in Spain. On the basis of 50 BT-5 tanks, a tank regiment of the Republican army was formed, which in October 1937 entered the combat area on the river. Ebro, having made a march of 630 km in two and a half days. Probably the most difficult test of the running capabilities of BT tanks was Khalkhin Gol. At the end of May 1939, two tank brigades (6th and 11th) completed an 800-kilometer march across the hot Mongolian steppe (the air temperature in those days reached 40 degrees) to the area of future hostilities. Here is how the Hero of the Soviet Union K.N. describes these events. Abramov, commander of the tank battalion of the 11th brigade: *"We were given an hour and a half for alert training. The battalion was ready to move in 55 minutes ... The column moved along a barely noticeable steppe road trodden by camel caravans. In some places the road disappeared - it was covered with sand. To overcome the sandy and swampy areas, it was necessary to transfer the tanks from wheeled to caterpillar. Well-trained crews performed this work in 30 minutes ... "* After three days of

the march, the armored shock battalion "in full force, without losing a single tank on the route, went to the designated area. More time (6 days) was spent on the 800-kilometer march by the 6th tank brigade. Six years after the

fighting at Khalkhin Gol, in August 1945, BT-7 tanks as part of the 6th Guards TA took part in the so-called Manchurian strategic operation. Tank brigades then marched 820 km through the Great Khingan mountain range with an average march rate of 180 km per day. The old batashki (the most recent of which were released five years ago) withstood such a test. And what will seem quite unbelievable - after the hardest forced march, after the battles with separate groups of Japanese troops, more than 80% of the tanks (as of September 30, 1945) were in good order! [179,180,181]. It could be said that BT tanks could easily cover 200 km from

the border to Rovaniemi in one light day, but in the Arctic from the end of May to mid-July the sun does not go beyond the horizon, and the "light day" lasts 24 hours a day. Of course, a march and an offensive are different types of combat work, and a tank breakthrough on

200 km deep cannot be a cakewalk. Was a tank division armed with "hopelessly obsolete" (as the Soviet propagandists repeated to us a thousand and once) light tanks capable of solving such a problem? And this question is best considered on a concrete example. From the many possible ones, we will choose the history of the 8th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht, whose actions (as will be shown below) were most directly related to the fate of the 1st Mechanized Corps, and indeed the entire Leningrad District (Northern Front)

as a whole. On the morning of June 22, 1941, the 56th tank corps of the Wehrmacht under the command of Manstein launched an offensive from the Memel (Klaipeda) region to Daugavpils. The corps included the 8th Panzer, 3rd Motorized and 290th Infantry Divisions. The inclusion of an infantry division (with horse-drawn artillery and soldiers on their own two legs) in the tank corps undoubtedly indicates that "history gave little time" to Hitler to prepare for war. The 290th Infantry immediately lagged behind the motorized units, and in the future, Manstein's corps advanced in two divisions. By the end of the first day of the war, the 8th Panzer Division captured the bridge across the Dubysa River near the town of Aregala (80 km from the border). On June 24, in the Ukmerge region, the 56th Panzer Corps broke out onto the Kaunas-Daugavpils highway. On the morning of June 26, the 8th Panzer Division captured two bridges (road and railway) across the Daugava and occupied Daugavpils with a fight. The next day, the 3rd motorized division also reached the Daugava and crossed it upstream. As Manstein writes in his famous memoirs, *"we did it in 4 days and 5 hours, counting from the moment the offensive began; we overcame the resistance of the enemy, passing 300 km*

*(in a straight line) in a continuous raid"* [182]. The 56th Panzer Corps covered **300 km in four days** not through the deserted forest-tundra, but "through the line" of two dozen rifle and tank divisions of the Baltic Military District (North-Western Front). By the time the German tank corps reached Daugavpils, the troops of the Second Strategic Echelon of the Red Army (21st mechanized corps, 41st rifle and 5th airborne corps) were already approaching the line of the Daugava from the east. The Soviet command, while planning the actions of the 1st Panzer Division in May 1941, could count on the fact that there would be no enemy troops within a radius of several hundred kilometers from Rovaniemi. And this, as events showed, was an absolutely correct assumption: directly at the border, in the Merkjärvi-Kusamo strip, there were actually two infantry divisions (German 169th and Finnish 6th) and a "divisional group" (a brigade consisting of two motorized infantry regiments) SS "Nord", and further in the heat up to the shore of the Gulf of Bothnia, there were no troops at all. The nearest Finnish division (3rd infantry in the area north of Suomussalmi) was separated from the line

of a possible breakthrough by Soviet tanks by 200 km of forest impassability. Any mention of the mechanized corps of the Leningrad Military District (1st MK and 10th MK) was accompanied in Soviet historiography by a strict reminder that they were armed with "hopelessly outdated" light tanks. And this is the purest truth. There were almost no tanks of the so-called "new types" (T-34 and KV) in the district (although the KV tanks were made at the Kirov plant in Leningrad). In the spring of 1941, dozens of railway trains were carrying new tanks to the direction of the future main attack - to the Kiev and Western military districts. However, it was not necessary to fight with neighboring districts, b

tank division of the Red Army with the weapons of Wehrmacht tank divisions, for example, from the same 8th TD from the Manstein tank corps [183, 184]. **8th TD (German) 1 TD (RKKA) 0**

Heavy tanks (KV-1)		5
Medium tanks (Pz-IV, T-28)	36	31
Light tanks (Pz-38(t), BT-7, BT-5, T-26, OT-26) 118		296
Tankettes (Pz-II , Pz-I, Pz Bef, T-27)	15	40
Total:	321	372

So, the basis of the tank fleet of the 8th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht was captured Czech tanks "Pz-38 (t)" -mm cannon and low-power (125 hp) motor. The basis of the tank fleet of the 1st Panzer Division was BT tanks (BT-7-176, BT-5-54), which surpassed the "Czech" in armament (45-mm cannon), speed twice. There was also a radio on the tank. The documents do not support widespread rumors that Soviet tank commanders led their units into battle waving colorful flags. In the 1st Panzer Division, out of 31 T-28 tanks, all 31 were equipped with a radio station, and out of 176 BT-7 tanks, 89 vehicles had a radio station [183]. For reference: the tank short-wave radio station 71-TK provided a communication range by telephone on the move - 15 km, by telephone in parking lots - up to 30 km, in telegraph mode - up to 50

km.

A careful reading of archival documents also reveals more distinct traces of the fact that the 1st Panzer Division, which arrived at Alakurtti, was preparing for "active defense", i.e. advance into Finland.

From the report of the commander of the pontoon-bridge battalion of the division, it can be seen that after arriving in the Alakurtti area, the battalion **began the construction of three (!) Bridges** across the Tunsu-Yoki River (the town of Alakurtti is located on the eastern bank of this river). By June 30, the work was completed - and the very next day the battalion began to destroy bridges and the railway track in the strip from the Salla border station to Alakurtti. By July 4, everything had already been successfully blown up and destroyed [185].

Soviet historians never wrote about the amazing history **of the construction and then the immediate destruction of bridges** on the polar river forgotten by God and people. But in principle, for all such cases, they have long had a universal explanation in store: "An erroneous decision was unreasonably made ..." According to the deeply correct remark of V. Suvorov, communist propaganda concealed from the population of the USSR even cases of natural disasters and catastrophic the emergence of the "native party" was not to blame in any way), but at the same time, with great readiness, it was in a hurry to expose the Soviet generals and even the future Generalissimo himself in the form of complete idiots who did not understand the very basics of military science. We will not repeat the old and already known mistakes. Timoshenko, Zhukov, Meretskov may not have been brilliant commanders, but they knew their business well, had extensive experience in actually driving regiments into battle, they understood the difference between a tank and a cannon, a cannon and a howitzer, defense and offense understood perfectly well. Accordingly, the redeployment of the 1st Panzer Division from Pskov

in Alakurtti was envisaged in the plan to cover the Leningrad District (and then put into practice) not out of stupidity, but with a very clear goal: to break into the depths of the defense of the Finnish army, capture the only "transport corridor" in all of northern Finland, interrupt the possible transfer of German troops from Norway along the "Arctic highway" from Petsamo to Rovaniemi and further to the central and southern regions of Finland.

In concluding this chapter, two important points should be made very clear and distinct. Unfortunately, they are often confused not only by professional amateurs "looking for a black cat in a dark room", but also by quite conscientious writers and readers.

The offensive orientation of the military doctrine of the Stalinist state is an undeniable, indisputable fact. **This is not a hypothesis. This is a statutory norm**, "categorically and convexly" expressed in the very first paragraphs of the Field Manual PU-39. *"If the enemy imposes war on us, the Workers 'and Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all the armies that have ever attacked. We will wage the war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory. The combat operations of the Red Army will be carried out for destruction. The main goal of the Red Army will be to achieve a decisive victory and completely crush the enemy.*

However, the offensive orientation of the operational plans of the Red Army **is by no means proof of the aggressiveness of** the foreign policy of the Stalinist empire. In no way. Attack and aggression are not synonymous. These are two words from two different languages. The military operational language knows such terms as "offensive", "breakthrough", "pursuit", "defense", "mobile defense", "withdrawal". In the language of politics, they talk about "aggression", "seizure", "annexation", "intervention", "assistance", "liberation", "salvation", "international duty", etc. These are two different languages. The strategic deployment plans of the Red Army do not contain the word "aggression", but there is also no word "liberation". Such words could not be there. The plans of the Soviet command **were neither aggressive nor liberating**. They were **offensive** and nothing more. Any army (especially the army

of a great world power) is created precisely in order to defeat (or at least significantly weaken) the armed forces of the enemy. The offensive was, is and will be the most effective way to solve this problem. Paragraph 10 of the Field Manual of the Red Army (*"only a decisive offensive in the main direction, culminating in encirclement and relentless pursuit, leads to the complete destruction of the enemy's forces and means"*) is not connected either with the "world revolution" or with Stalin's aggressive, predatory foreign policy plans. This (and similar) paragraph is simply reasonable. It concentrates the centuries-old experience of military art. The enemy must be destroyed or forced to surrender.

What to do later with this enemy, with his territory, with his material production resources, with the remnants of his army. The Grand Plan (September 18, 1940) is already a matter of politics. A question for the solution of which the operational principles of warfare have absolutely no significance. Not only aggressive, but also not wanting anything else but peace and tranquility, the state should strive for

to ensure that the victory was won with "little bloodshed", with minimal destruction of their own territory and minimal casualties among their own population. There was and is no other way to this ideal, except for a decisive offensive with the aim of "defeating the enemy on his own territory". **The ultimate**

**and invariable aggressiveness of the Stalinist empire** found its expression and confirmation not in the regulations and the system of combat training of the Red Army, but in real acts of aggression, international robbery, brazen interference in the affairs of sovereign countries, some of which have already been mentioned in previous chapters. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey. Here is a list that gives an unambiguous answer to the question about the real, i.e. great-power and aggressive direction of Stalin's plans. On the state emblem of the USSR, the hammer and sickle covered the entire globe, on which globe the boundaries of the "worker-peasant state" were not marked even by the thinnest line. And this simple symbolism was not at all accidental.

## Chapter

### 2.8 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The armed aggression of the Soviet Union against Finland, which began on November 30, 1939, ended with the signing of the Moscow Peace Treaty on March 12, 1940. Not only because of the circumstances of its conclusion (Stalin refused to suspend the offensive of the Red Army, at least for the period of negotiations), but also in its content this treaty was nothing more than an act of international robbery and extortion, incompatible with the generally recognized norms of law. Vast territories separated by hundreds or even thousands of kilometers from Leningrad were forcibly taken away from Finland (the strengthening of the defense capability of which was retroactively announced as the main reason that “forced” Stalin to carry out an armed attack on a deliberately weak neighbor). From a formal legal point

of view, **the Moscow Treaty of March 12, 1940 is almost no different from the Armistice Agreement between France and Germany, signed in the Compiègne Forest on June 24, 1940.** The clause “almost” refers only to the fact that the question of whether who (Germany or France) was the aggressor, and who was the victim of aggression, allows different interpretations. Strictly speaking, it was France that declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, and it was the French troops who were the first to cross the border (September 9) and invaded the adjacent territory of Germany. Yes, the Nuremberg Tribunal rejected such casuistry and found Germany guilty of unleashing a war in Europe, including a war against France. Nevertheless, the topic for a purely abstract discussion remains. In the case of the 1st Soviet-Finnish war (“winter war”), everything is very clear: Finland did not attack, did not threaten, and could not - due to the difference in size - threaten the mighty Soviet Union, whose army outnumbered all the male population of the Suomi country (including infants and decrepit old people).

In modern Germany, there is hardly a far-right, revanchist extremist group that has the audacity to demand the “return” of Paris and Orleans, while referring to the terms of the 1940 Armistice Agreement. Well, in France, only a few of those who, during the years of occupation, accused de Gaulle, Free France, and anti-fascist resistance fighters of violating the “truce” with the invaders, escaped criminal punishment. These inspiring examples should, in my opinion, keep Russian historians from resenting with an air of offended innocence that not all citizens and not all leaders of Finland considered themselves morally obliged to comply with the terms of the Moscow Treaty of March 12, 1940.

However, from the spring of 1940 to the spring of 1941, the question of how the leadership of Finland relates to the Moscow Treaty. still had no practical value. **The main and determining situation was how the leadership of the USSR treated this treaty.** This question is the subject of the second part of our book. Facts, both relatively new and long known,

testify to the fact that in Moscow the Moscow Peace Treaty was perceived as temporary,

forced and unfortunate stop on the way to complete annexation of Finland. Already the unceremonious seizure of the plant in Enso, carried out by armed means 10 days after the signing of the treaty, was a clear example of what awaits Finland in the near future. Threats and claims, in no way based on the letter and meaning of the peace treaty, rained down one after another. Transit of military cargo in Hanko, ultimatum demands for the resignation of Finnish government ministers and interference in the presidential elections, the destruction of the Kaleva passenger plane, demands to "return" the rolling stock of the Finnish railways to the Soviet Union and stop the construction of defensive structures "on the Helsingfors direction", systematic violation of borders Soviet reconnaissance aircraft - all this spoke with the utmost frankness of Stalin's obvious unwillingness to establish peaceful, good-neighborly relations with Finland, which he had devastated.

Documents that became available in the early 1990s showed that the numerous facts of "pressing" Finland mentioned above served not only the purposes of psychological pressure on the country's leadership, but also directly prepared a second attempt at invasion and occupation. The operational plans of the high command of the Red Army, developed in the autumn of 1940, **clearly and directly set the task of our occupation of the entire territory of Finland (including the capital of the state of Helsinki), the complete defeat and destruction of the Finnish army.** The text of the directives of the Soviet command leaves no doubt that the implementation of these plans was not made in any way dependent on the possible appearance on the territory of Finland of a foreign (in the real conditions of that time - German) army, capable of creating a threat to Leningrad. Rather, on the contrary, it was precisely the situation that had arisen that Finland had no military allies that was seen as a particularly favorable moment that should have been used. It is also noteworthy that in the text of the "Considerations" and "directives" of the high command of the Red Army there was no room **for at least formal reservations that invasion plans were being developed "in case Finland violates the terms of the peace treaty."** And in this sense, the Soviet plans differed markedly from Hitler's plan "Barbarossa", which nevertheless stated that *"all orders that will be given by the commanders-in-chief on the basis of this directive must absolutely definitely proceed from the fact that we are talking about precautionary measures on that case, if Russia changes its current position in relation to us."*

Taking into account the content of the operational plans of the Soviet command, such facts as the deployment of mobile railway artillery batteries of special power on the Khanko Peninsula or the creation of the notorious "Society for Peace and Friendship with the USSR", which - to your displeasure of the Moscow "curators" - and failed to *"break the backbone of the Finnish bourgeoisie"* (although it managed to launch a destabilization campaign with bloody street riots and casualties). The documents of the leadership of the Comintern and the "Moscow leading core" of the Finnish Communist Party that have become known are extremely frankly and unambiguously set the task of *"turning Finland into a Soviet republic" and providing the Finnish people with "such freedom and independence as the peoples of the Karelian-Finnish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian Soviet republics"*. In the light of such documents and plans



the seemingly paradoxical decisions of the Soviet leadership on the creation of the Karelian-Finnish Union Republic, on the completely artificial planting of the Finnish language in it, unknown to the absolute majority of the population, on the "evening courses" of Finnish literacy for the party nomenclature of this stillborn "reserve Finland" become clear ...

"God does not give horns to a vigorous cow." This rather rude folk saying extremely briefly and accurately describes the entire history of the Soviet-Finnish confrontation in 1939-1940. In March 1940, the vague threat of armed intervention by the Anglo-French bloc alarmed Stalin to such an extent that he decided to temporarily suspend the final reprisal against recalcitrant Finland. In the autumn of 1940, Germany's barely visible interest in Finnish nickel and the "Finnish transport corridor" forced Stalin to stop halfway through practical preparations for the "final solution" of the Finnish question. The head of the USSR Government himself was sent to Berlin to sort things out with a former accomplice in robbery, which accomplice, who had gained strength and impudence over a year, was rapidly turning into the main enemy.

During the negotiations held on November 12-13, 1940, an absolute discrepancy between the positions of the parties on the Finnish question was revealed. Hitler categorically objected to a new war in Finland, Molotov, referring to the secret Protocol of August 23, 1939 on the division of spheres of interest in Eastern Europe, insisted on his "right" to occupy Finland without postponing this matter for a year or six months ( *" why should Russia delay the implementation of her plans for six months or a year? After all, the German-Russian agreement did not contain any time limits and within their spheres of influence, neither side's hands are tied"*). Of course, from the point of view of

observing the terms of the August (1939) deal, Molotov was absolutely right. But in this matter, we are not interested in the Stalinist-Hitlerian "showdown on concepts", but the attitude of the USSR leadership to the Moscow Peace Treaty with Finland, the existence of which Molotov never remembered, but he expressed his intention to "liquidate" this Treaty (together with independent Finland) **with with the utmost clarity** (*"answering a question from the Fuhrer, he stated that he envisions a settlement within the same framework as in Bessarabia and neighboring countries"*). After the completion of the Berlin talks

in Moscow, they had to reckon with the fact that a new war with Finland would lead to a serious aggravation of relations with Germany. Strictly speaking, this statement meant little in practice. From the expression of displeasure to armed opposition is a huge distance. Molotov, for example, repeatedly told the Germans that *"the appearance of any foreign troops on the territory of Bulgaria will be considered as a violation of the security interests of the USSR."* Despite these completely unequivocal warnings, on March 1, 1941, Germany "attached" Bulgaria to the Tripartite Pact and sent its troops into its territory. From Moscow, in response to this clearly unfriendly step by Germany, nothing significant, except for the public expression of "diplomatic concern", did not follow.

At the beginning of 1941, Germany's ability to provide armed support to Finland was, in fact, negligible. On the territory of Finland itself, there were no German troops in numbers worthy of attention and mention at all. The grouping of German troops in Norway was by no means inactive, but solved the tasks of defending the coast (with a total length of more than 1.5 thousand km) from a possible English landing, the threat of which had an extremely strong effect on Hitler. On March 4, 1941, two cruisers and five destroyers of the British fleet, without suspecting it, actively intervened in the intricacies of the Soviet-German-Finnish contradictions. The British shelled the Norwegian port and city of Svolvær, sank several merchant ships and captured 220 German sailors and Wehrmacht soldiers. On March 12, this raid became the subject of discussion by the German High Command, during which Hitler further reduced the composition of the forces of the Army of Norway, which had previously been allowed to be involved in Operation Barbarossa. Even less realistic would be an attempt to launch an offensive on the western borders of the USSR in the situation of winter-spring 1941, i.e. when the strategic concentration of German troops in the East was not only not completed, but practically had not yet

begun. And yet, the Soviet leadership did not dare to conduct a military operation in the winter of 1941. The guns on the Finnish border were silent. The lack of documentary sources does not allow us to indicate the specific reasons for this "non-aggression". Let us repeat once again that the documents of the Red Army command for the period from the beginning of 1941 to June 22 were removed from the available archival funds. On the other hand, the development of invasion plans (within the general framework of the "directive" of November 25, 1940) continued, as evidenced by both the field trips conducted in Karelia by the command of the Leningrad, Ural and Oryol military districts, and the planned by the General Staff of the Red Army for early May 1941 d. an operational strategic game with the participation of the command and staffs of the Leningrad and Arkhangelsk districts (that is, the future North-Western and Northern fronts in the categories of "directive"

of November 25, 1940). Be that as it may, but 1941 began with new attempts at the economic and political "pressure" of Finland (rupture of the trade agreement, cessation of grain supplies, "nickel crisis"). As expected, the result turned out to be exactly the opposite of the plan. The Finnish leadership, secretly informed by Berlin about the course and results of Molotov's negotiations with Hitler, took an extremely tough position, and the attempt at blackmail, this time not supported by a real readiness to start a war, failed miserably. On the other hand, the crisis of January-February 1941 inevitably led to even closer economic and then political rapprochement between Finland and Germany. In general, the actions of the Stalinist leadership in the "Finnish direction" of the foreign policy of the USSR in the period of spring 1940 to spring 1941 should be assessed as a **complete failure of a strategic scale. Finland was neither "reunited" with the Soviet "Karelian-Finland" nor turned into a peaceful, friendly neighbor.**

April-May 1941 was a turning point in the history of the Second World War and the Soviet-German confrontation, as one of the main factors determining the course of this war. Despite the fact that historians cannot yet give exact dates and quote fundamental documents, many "indirect

evidence" allows us to assume with a high degree of certainty that it was in May 1941 that the decision was made in Moscow to start a large-scale war against Germany, and not sometime in the indefinite future, but in July-August 1941. From the moment such a decision was made, the Soviet -Finnish relations moved to the second (if not the tenth) plan in the face of impending grandiose events. The intention to concentrate the main forces on one, German, front, limiting itself to defense in the north (on the border with Finland), was certainly correct (and the only possible one, taking into account the need to create a significant numerical superiority in the West). In the new situation that had arisen, Comrade Stalin was no longer up to "turning Finland into a Soviet republic." First of all, it was necessary to *"defeat the main forces of the German army"* and *"take possession of the territory of former Poland and East Prussia."* After the victory over Germany, the rapid increase in the number of "fraternal union republics" would become inevitable and inevitable.

At the same time, in the late spring of 1941, German-Finnish relations began to change qualitatively. This question has been carefully clouded and deliberately distorted by the efforts of two generations of Soviet (and now Russian) historians. Nevertheless, it is not so difficult to sort out this heap and get out of it the pearl grain of real events

and facts. **As of June 25, 1941, there was no public, open agreement between Finland and Germany.** Between these two countries, normal diplomatic relations were maintained - but nothing more. Between Finland and Germany there was neither a non-aggression pact (the German proposal to conclude such an agreement was rejected by the Finnish side in the spring of 1939), nor a Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance (similar to the one that was concluded between the USSR and Kuusinen's "people's government"). Finland did not join the Tripartite Pact and did not (unlike the Soviet Union) negotiate such accession. Thus, from a formal legal point of view, **interstate relations between Germany and Finland were at a much lower level than relations between Germany and the USSR.** Between the last two, a "Treaty of Friendship and Border" was concluded; the German foreign minister, as Hitler's plenipotentiary, twice visited Moscow, where he held official negotiations with the participation of Molotov and Stalin; The head of the Soviet government, Molotov, visited Berlin, where he conducted quite official negotiations with Hitler. Nothing of the kind, nothing even close to similar, happened between Berlin and Helsinki.

Does it make sense to discuss the issue of the presence or absence of official, public agreements?

With regard to Hitler's Germany and Stalin's empire, no. Both dictators were ready at any moment to tear up any international treaty, like a miserable piece of paper, and "public opinion" in both totalitarian states could meet such a decision of the leader (Führer) exclusively and only with "hot, unanimous approval." Finland in the summer of 1941 remained a democratic state, with a president and parliament elected by the people. Such power in such a state would be bound by the presence of an openly concluded treaty of alliance with Germany. But there was no such agreement.

Was there a secret agreement between Finland and Germany on military-political alliance?

This is a very important question. In the real situation of the European war that is already blazing for the second year, perhaps more significant than the question of the existence of an open, publicly concluded agreement. **Such a secret agreement was sought.** Searched with great care. And not in the blessed era of "glasnost and perestroika", but immediately after the end of the war between Finland and the USSR in the fall of 1944. Under the terms of the Armistice Agreement, the "warmongers" were to be brought to justice. And since Finland was not forced to surrender, and the Soviet Union acted only as one of the "allied powers" with which Finland concluded an armistice agreement, evidence was needed to try the leaders of Finland. Stalin could not conduct a trial of Ryti and Tanner in the style of the infamous "Moscow Trials" of 1936. We needed documents and facts confirming a secret alliance with Hitler.

They searched and found nothing. The search was greatly facilitated by the fact of the complete defeat and unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. The archives of the Nazi "Reich" were at the disposal of the winners. In April 1945, Yuryo (Yuri) Leino, a communist, son-in-law of Comrade Kuusinen, became the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Finland. Under the "roof" of the Allied Control Commission, Finland was flooded by employees of the Soviet special services. It came to abductions and secret removal of Finnish citizens from the country to the Lefortovo prison of the NKVD. And yet, **no trace of a secret intergovernmental agreement between Berlin and Helsinki could be found.** This discouraging fact

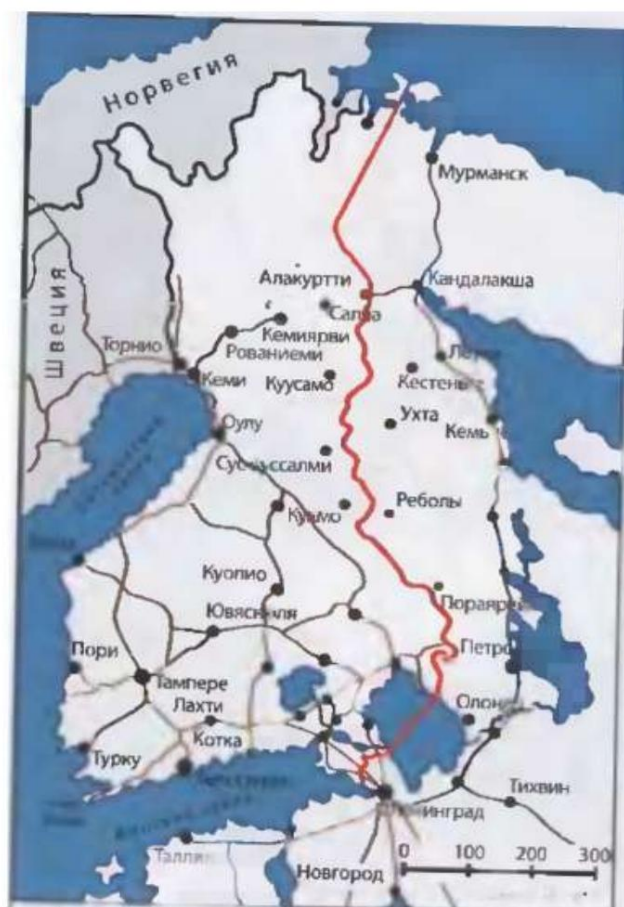
leads "historians" of a particular orientation to do exactly what they are doing to this day. Out of complete hopelessness, the scientists of the scientific school of the father and son Baryshnikov on dozens of pages talk about how glorious Soviet intelligence officers overheard a conversation in a restaurant in the city of Helsinki, at the entrance of which a prominent political figure X, in a fair amount of drunkenness, said: "Yes, I can't stand these ryussi!" To which his companion, the famous

General Y, famously knocking over the eighth glass of tea, replied: "I still dream of living to see the day when the Germans drive the damned Russ beyond the Urals, into the taiga to the bears!" "A-ah-ah-ah-ah!!

You see, - Russian historians of the Soviet spill comment on this drunken chatter - during a meeting held at the Z Hotel, representatives of the high command of the Finnish army and reactionary parliamentary circles decided to seek an agreement with Germany, on the basis of which the Finnish military dreamed of occupying the territory of the Soviet Union from Ladoga to the Urals ... "It is a pity that no one has yet written such a voluminous study of topics and verbatim expressions in which Soviet-Finnish relations were discussed at officer drinking parties on the other side of the border ... All this would be funny - if the authors of such "scientific works" were engaged in writing scripts for children's cartoons, and did not try to pass off their crudely crafted "order" for historical research. In order to find out how the Finns after the "winter war" relate to "Russia", it was not at all worth spending budget money to pay for agents. The Finnish people fiercely hated Stalin and the Stalinist empire. He hated, dreamed of revenge and revenge. There is no reason to be surprised that in some heads (especially heated ones)

alcohol) such sentiments could sometimes be transformed into hatred for the Russian people as such. In war, as in war. However, Mannerheim, Talvela and other generals of the "old guard", participants in the Civil War of 1918-1921, could hardly fail to understand that the Russian people themselves are the first and main victim of the Stalinist regime. However, hatred of Stalin and a military-political alliance with Hitler formalized by mutual obligations are two very different categories. Churchill, for example, hated the Bolsheviks and Comrade

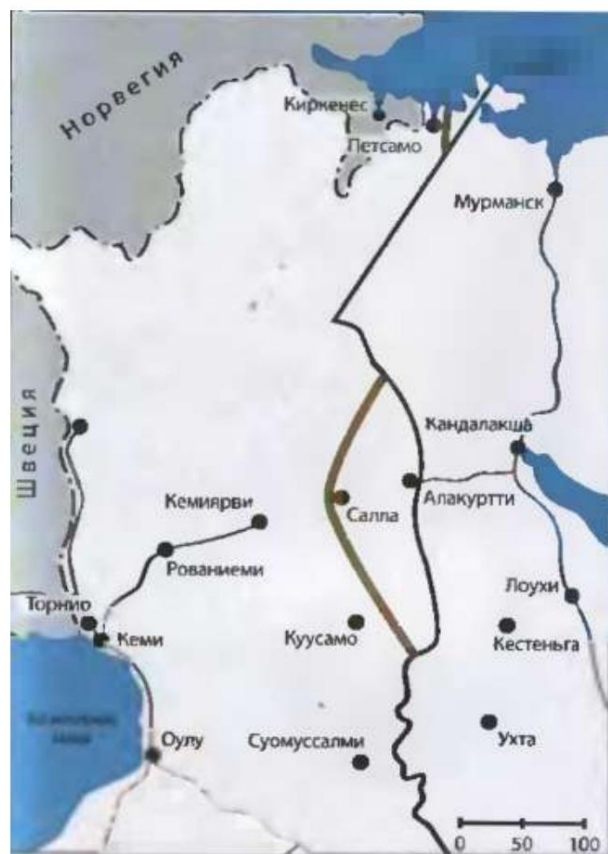
Stalin personally no less than Mannerheim. All this by no means led Churchill to an alliance with Hitler, moreover, it did not even prevent him from entering into an alliance with Stalin in a situation where such an alliance became necessary to save the British Empire. Baron Mannerheim, a refined and arrogant aristocrat, despised and hated the "brown" upstarts no less than the "reds". In the spring of 1939, after the occupation of the Czech Republic, in a letter to his sister Eva, he writes: *"We were indignant and indignant at the actions of the Russians, but this is only child's play compared to Adolfus, the head of his Cheka, Himmler, and his beloved assistants ... They just want to turn the peoples of Europe into white Negroes to serve the Third Reich... We are facing the end of the world..."* [68]. Fortunately, the end of the world did not come that time. In particular, because the personal sympathies and real actions of responsible politicians did not always coincide.



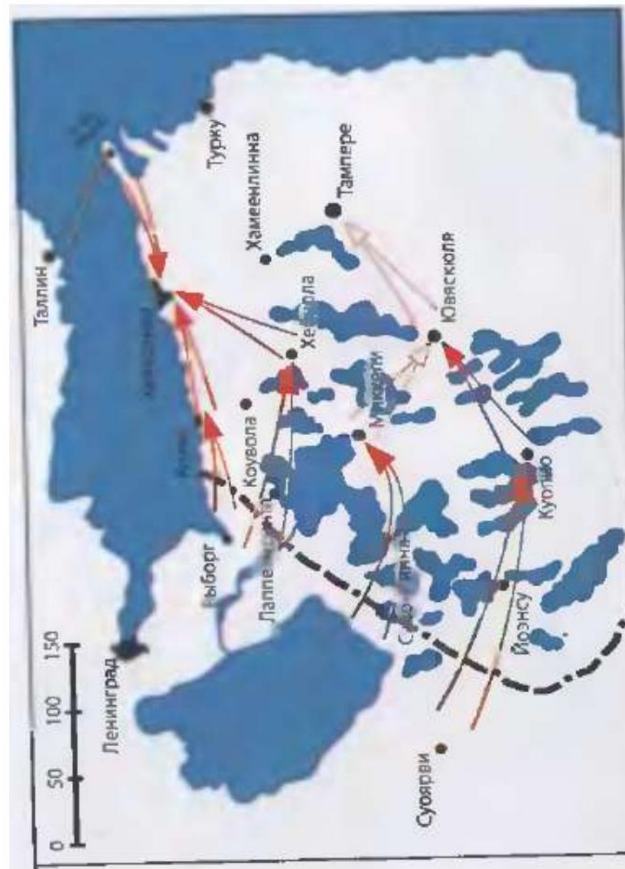
Map number 1. Finland and Karelia.



Map No. 2. Soviet-Finnish border in 1939 and 1940 Southern section of the "moving the front line on March 12, 1940. Soviet demands for the 1940 border border" at the 1939 negotiations.



Map number 3. Soviet-Finnish border 1939 and 1940 Northern section.

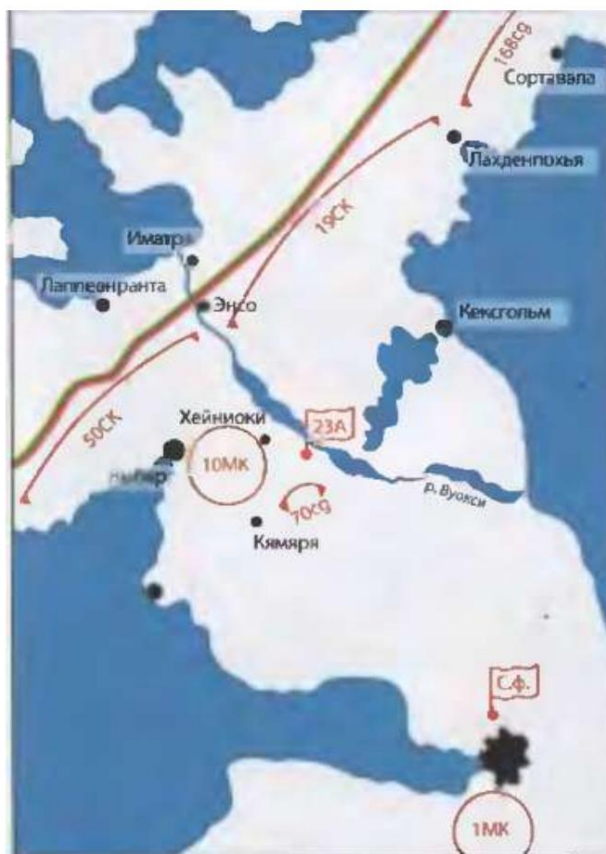


Map No. 4. Plan for the invasion of Finland. Southern area.





Map number 5. Plan for the invasion of Finland. Northern section.



Map number 6. Deployment of the troops of the Northern Front. Southern area.



Map number 7. Deployment of the troops of the Northern Front. Northern section.



Map No. 8 Movement routes of the 4th Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht, 1st and 10th mechanized corps of the Red Army 22-26 June 1941



Map No. 9 Airfields in the Arctic.